

GOOD ENGLISH *in* BUSINESS



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PRACTICAL ENGLISH SERIES

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GOOD ENGLISH IN BUSINESS

PRACTICAL ENGLISH SERIES

GOOD ENGLISH *in* **BUSINESS**

Compiled by **GRENVILLE KLEISER**

**FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE
OF GRENVILLE KLEISER'S
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
STUDENTS**

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PART I
CORRECT SPEECH IN BUSINESS

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PART I

CORRECT SPEECH IN BUSINESS

BUSINESS genius just happens. All that science has learned about heredity throws no light on the exceptional man. We know he is the product of his ancestors; chiefly of his parents, but on a descending scale also of his grandparents and their forbears. Somehow all these strains unite to form this brilliancy. The family for generations may have shown nothing but mediocrity. Half a dozen brothers and sisters with exactly the same line of breeding are commonplace.

Genius obeys its own laws; makes them, in fact. It will always find a way. Therefore it need not occupy our attention. But there is a large middle class which is plastic. It can largely control its own destiny. Individuals in this group may raise themselves, or may allow themselves to sink to the level of hewers of wood and drawers of water. It is such men who need stimulation and guidance.

Good Speech Essential

Factors in business success are numerous. Some, like honesty, industry, intelligence, are

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elemental. Others, like good appearance, good manners, good language, are secondary. That is to say, there is little hope of any considerable career for a man who is untrustworthy, lazy or stupid. Men have reached the top who are quite lacking in the graces, who may even be uncouth. But for the average individual, pleasing externals and agreeable speech are a great aid. They may even spell the difference between a large salary and a small one.

This point is worth developing. You are in business to earn money. Ask yourself how much help you will get from a good pronunciation and enunciation and the use of proper words. Let us say you are one of a number of young men who are seeking a job at a bank. They have various advantages to help them. Some are pleasant to look at; some have had desirable experience in business; some have friendly letters of recommendation. The choice of the employment manager may not be easy. He speaks with each applicant. Some of them are in the rough. They may be potential diamonds, but now they are mere carbon. They say "He don't" and "I done." They are quietly eliminated.

It is likely that work in the bank would gradually polish them. But why should they be hired when other men are available who have already been through the burnishing

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process or have never had to go through it? The bank recognizes that, in certain elements, it can not outdo its rivals. All will give about the same amount of service to their depositors, will pay the same interest on deposits and charge the same interest on loans.

But there may be decided competition in the factors of friendliness and good address on the part of employees. Even a busy teller or note-clerk has some conversation with the depositors; the use of grammatical construction and refined language will help to make a favorable impression. A bank is merely the aggregation of all its staff. The president and cashier will probably have ways that are more or less ingratiating, but the ordinary patron seldom has business with them. He does have daily contact with the subordinates, and it is on them that chiefly depends the feeling he will have toward the bank. You can not censure the officials for selecting recruits whose language fits them for the drawing-room rather than for the barnyard.

If you could dissect a man's language apart from his personality and character, the language would not be highly important. It merely serves for the conveyance of ideas. It is not a substitute for thinking. But a man's speech and use of words are a part of him which is inseparable from the rest. If his pronunciation is of the "furgit it" type, if slang and vulgarisms grace or disgrace every sen-

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tence, you draw some wide conclusions. You take for granted that his home influences were not very refined, that his school opportunities were limited, and that he did not make the best use of those he had. This background may have been his misfortune, not his fault. But it remains conspicuous nevertheless.

You are likely to impute some sort of slackness to him. Many boys whose parents were poor have managed to overcome the shortcomings of a defective education. They have taken correspondence courses, gone to night-school, read good books, have sought to hear good English spoken. We all know men of real polish who have never gone beyond the eighth grade. By diligent study and attention they have made up for early shortcomings. A man who drives a truck can say "I wanna," "I'm gonna," and so on, without disqualifying himself for his job. But if he has his eye on something higher, he is handicapped. People will think, if they do not say it: "Thy speech betrayeth thee."

Education Becoming More Necessary

It is recognized that you can form some sort of estimate of a man's schooling by the language he uses. To-day there is an important movement in this country for higher education. While the population has increased one-half, the number of students in

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high schools and colleges has been multiplied by seven. In other words, advance education is growing fourteen times as rapidly as the number of inhabitants. The man with an A.B. or a B.S. to his name is now as common as was formerly the graduate of a high school. Learning is decidedly at a premium; perhaps the situation could be described more accurately by saying that ignorance is at a serious discount. When few persons had studied rhetoric and Latin, you yourself might not feel the lack of them so much. But if a large part of your associates go to high school and a considerable sprinkling to college, you are distinctly handicapped if you get no further than the common schools.

A bank president was asked about the educational status of the employees of his institution. He said that he had a general notion that a young man or woman who had gone further than the eighth grade was preferred. He looked over the establishment and found that every one of the younger group had been to high school, business college or university. The older men in general had not had such advantages. In their younger days this was not a serious impediment. Now it is.

Education does much more for a man than to teach him good English. It improves his intellectual processes, gives him knowledge, enables him to talk to people with greater self-confidence. But English is now recognized

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as of supreme importance in every curriculum. Choice of studies is universal, but English remains the one prescribed study. You may or you may not have courses in Latin, Greek, mathematics, French, German, chemistry or history. But English you can not escape.

The preeminence given to this study is comparatively recent. Formerly Latin, Greek and mathematics were the marks of an educated man or woman. The comparative neglect of our own tongue and literature led to a lopsided culture. Furthermore, it proved a serious impediment in social intercourse and in business.

The late President Eliot of Harvard, curiously enough, led the fight both for freer choice of studies and for insistence on English. Originally he had taught chemistry, but he came to value acquaintance with the vernacular at its true worth. He thus expressed himself:

“I recognize but one mental acquisition as an essential part of the education of a lady or gentlemen, namely an accurate and refined use of the mother tongue.”

His idea was adopted at Harvard and has now spread to practically all the colleges and universities. The lack of adequate instruction in English was most conspicuous in the technical schools. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching sent out

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23,000 circulars to engineers to learn the needs of the profession. A summary of the replies says:

"In questioning the efficiency of the engineering schools at the present time, there are four conspicuous things in which the professional men show a fair degree of unanimity. The first and most important is English. A large majority of the letters received mention the absolute necessity for higher efficiency in the training in English."

Confirmation of these conclusions is given by the Stevens Institute of Technology, which while not large has always stood among the best. Its catalog contains the statement:

"No effort is spared to impress upon the students that their success as engineers will depend largely upon their knowledge and use of language."

A student in a school of engineering failed in a physics examination. He protested to the professor that he had answered nearly all the questions correctly.

"So you did," was the reply. "I gave you a low mark because your language was so poor. When you are an engineer you will have to write reports to your superiors or to your clients. If you use such grammar, spelling, and construction as appear in your examination paper, those who read the report will have no confidence in you. They will suppose that your education in engineering

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is as deficient as your education in English. The credit of the school demands that you write more acceptably."

This relates to the profession which rests mostly on mathematics and physics. If the subject is so weighty to these men, it is even more so to lawyers, physicians, and business men generally. A professor in a medical school agreed with the professor of physics who has just been quoted. He marked failure on a paper which showed an adequate knowledge of the subject. He replied to a protest from the student:

"The heading on your paper was 'Obsteterics.' How can you expect to practise it if you can not even spell it?"

Colleges are supposed to be wrapped up in ideals of culture. But instruction in English is of such intensely practical value that they have had to give marked attention to it.

The enormous expansion in the number of college students since the World War has brought forth two classes of Jeremiahs. There are still some self-made men, so called, who think this book-learning business has been rather overdone. At least they say so, but invariably they want their sons and daughters to have a good dose of this objectionable culture. Furthermore, they often give money to colleges.

The second class of critics are college professors who, from time to time, doubt the

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wisdom of sending youths to a higher institution of learning when they are not sufficiently in earnest. The dean of a famous Eastern college estimates that one-sixth of its students are misplaced and should be doing something else. The poor boy or girl, whose family struggle to aid them, and who must in part support themselves, are recognized as desirable material. Those who seriously dislike book-study and prefer to do things with their hands, are thought to be wasting their time at college; the idle rich are similarly classified.

To recognize a distaste for a task as a valid reason for giving it up would lead to a general disruption of human affairs. How many children would go to school, how many men and women would work, if they were told to do just as they pleased about it? If the student is taking a classical course when his tastes and talents are all for mechanics, he should certainly be switched over to mechanics. Modern curricula are broad enough to give ample opportunities for preferences of all kinds.

That a rich youth spends much time and money on automobiling, feasting, and dancing, is unfortunate. But the college is at least a curb on this. He must go to classes and study to remain on the rolls. His father knows that mere residence on the campus and attendance at lectures give some sort of in-

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tellectual refinement. One reason why these unsympathetic students are maintained at college is that their parents want them to make a good impression in after-years. The use of good English can be learned nowhere else to such advantage as in an institution for higher learning. Even for a wealthy idler, this indication of culture is highly desirable. For the man of affairs it is absolutely essential to-day.

English in Business Colleges

The business college is meant to serve a definite purpose. Enrichment of life is not sought after, but enrichment of the pocket-book is. The success of such a school depends on its turning out graduates who will give speedy satisfaction to their employers. It is not strange, therefore, that great emphasis is laid on the study of English. Rhetoric and grammar are reduced to their practical application. Drill in them is strict and unceasing. Spelling, that bugaboo of the primary school, again comes to the fore. Pupils can not be expected to learn how to spell every word in the language of business, but they should recognize their limitations; that is to say, they should invariably go to the dictionary when in doubt.

Such intensive study of English is not on the higher plane. It gives you no deep, full knowledge. That can come only from

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intimacy with higher text-books and with the works of great authors. A high-school senior may not exactly see how the reading of "Ivanhoe" and "David Copperfield" is going to help him get a promotion when he goes to work. But familiarity with even good fiction will broaden his vocabulary and sharpen his ability to discriminate between words of similar but not identical meaning. When he enters business life, his progress will be furthered by continued reading of good literature.

Unfortunately there is a wide-spread notion that high-grade books are dull. To certain people they are and must remain so. Even regarded as a task, they will repay the labor spent on them. For many masterpieces are, at the same time, interesting if we can take them up with unbiased mind. This does not mean merely Dickens and Thackeray, Stevenson and Kipling. Gibbon's "History," Boswell's "Life of Johnson," Pepy's "Diary," Macaulay's "Essays" are all intensely human. Franklin's "Autobiography" is very fascinating. Many a man has gone to the late President Eliot's "Harvard Classics" with a grim determination to do or die, only to find a delightful pastime. What better story could you want than the "Odyssey?"

A father who had quit even the meager country school at twelve, educated himself

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by going over the lessons of his three children as they went through high school. He had to peg away hard at algebra and geometry, but the prescribed reading was a delight. His enthusiasm infected the youngsters and they came to look on the reading of these books not as tasks but as pleasures.

Stress, however, should be laid on the fact that wide reading is not the only essential to a command of good English. Technical study must not be overlooked. There are natural artists and natural musicians, but they reach fame only by the most laborious industry. Temperament is not a substitute for training but an inspiration for it. You might read hundreds of volumes and yet not know whether it is correct to say "He was given a dinner" or "He ought to quickly act." Text-book instruction alone will give you command of such details.

Latin and Greek, especially Latin, are of great assistance in acquiring mastery of the English tongue. Even Anglo-Saxon is helpful. But if opportunity for studying these dead languages has been lacking, you can make up the deficiency. Only you will have to work harder than the man who has been well-grounded in them. Familiarity with a modern language or two will give you a better insight into your own.

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Good Business English an Art

This treatise deals with good English in business. Some people want to discriminate between literary English and business English. They are the same. Each has its field and its appropriate formulas, but they use the same words and obey the same rules of grammar and rhetoric. If a phrase is bad in a history, it would be bad in a sales-letter. If a piece of writing is clear, simple, terse, effective, it is equally admirable whether it was intended for an ambitious essay or an advertisement of a motor-car.

Indeed, there is no necessary implication of inferiority in business-writing. Quite the opposite may be the fact. Authors of valuable standard works sometimes use poor diction. A sales-circular or an advertisement may be written with much cleverness. Successful literary men often receive large payments for purely business productions. An able correspondence-supervisor or a brilliant advertising-writer will earn far more than a man who does hack work for publishers. This money comparison does not tell the whole story. Geniuses like Poe and Heine were always poor. But financial rewards in our day will serve as some sort of standard of value.

All this does not mean that essays, and collection letters are written in the same style. Each must have a character appropriate to

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the effect which it wishes to produce. But different types of literary work employ different methods. A philosophical work and a society novel have diverse tones. A text-book aims at solidity, a fantastic romance at airiness. But business-writing and literature are nearer to one another than they formerly were. The old notions of the dignity of a historical style have been outgrown. The orotund periods of Gibbon, wonderful as they were; the carefully studied antitheses of Macaulay, have been replaced by simplicity and directness. The historian now aims at the very qualities which mark good letter-writing.

If then there is this similarity, if not identity, between the language of books and that of commerce, there is all the more reason for extensive reading of good authors. Of almost equal value is a devotion to the dictionary. You will learn much there about words which you can find nowhere else. If you have occasion to get acquainted with a word, do the job thoroughly. If you are merely looking up the spelling or pronunciation, read the definitions and etymology as well. You will remember each one of these aspects better if you know the other three.

The Use of the Dictionary

It is a psychological fact that you will remember better how to spell a word if you look it up in a dictionary than if you ask

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some one else how to spell it. "Easy come, easy go," says the proverb. Consulting the book takes more time than the other way; but a deeper impression is made on the mind. Consequently that impression is more lasting. An unabridged dictionary is much better than a small one. More time is required to find the word, hence the mental effort involved is longer and stronger. When you pay a dollar for an article, you treasure it more than if it cost a quarter. Moreover, the larger book gives you much more information.

If you will persist in this study of a big dictionary you will be surprized to find out what an interesting book it is. Language is often a crystallization of human experience and history. Words change their meanings curiously with the flight of centuries. A few examples are here given of the bits of odd information which you can obtain by delving into the dictionary.

"Tribulation" is from the Latin "tribulum," an implement for threshing. Tribulation is then a process for getting rid of chaff and impurities.

"Plague" is a blow or stroke. Formerly epidemics were regarded as an infliction of Providence, either as a punishment for sins or as a beneficial chastisement.

"Heaven" is from heave; the sky is heaved or raised above us.

A "pagan" was originally a villager. As

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the churches were first built in cities, a man who lived in the rural regions was not likely to be a member.

"Heathen" simply meant a man who lived out on a heath, far from the churches.

"Poltroon" is from the Italian *poltro*, bed, and was used to designate a lazy lie-a-bed or sluggard.

"Dunce" comes from Duns Scotus, a learned man whose philosophy was ridiculed, and thus became out of date.

"Idiot" is from the Greek and originally meant a man in private, not public, life.

"Miser" is pure Latin for miserable and stingy.

The "left" hand is the one that usually leaves things, the hand that is least employed.

"Husband" is the man who dwells in the house. "Wife" comes from the verb to weave.

"Companion" primarily meant "with bread," describing the person with whom you shared your bread.

"Paraphernalia" is from the Greek and etymologically signifies "beyond the bride's dower." In law it was that part of the wife's goods which would belong to her after her husband's death. Now it has come to mean implements.

"Vernacular" comes from a Latin word

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designating a slave born on his master's premises.

You can see that that forbidding looking volume, the unabridged dictionary, is a mine of quaint and curious lore. With a proper attitude of mind you can make your explorations therein a real pleasure. You remember when *Tom Sawyer* had to whitewash the fence, his playmates at first felt sorry for him. But he pictured his task so alluringly that they paid him for the privilege of sharing it. It will aid you in business to be able from time to time to tell the origin or the history of words that may happen to be mentioned in conversation.

The Bible, apart from its religious significance, is a treasure-book, well deserving its etymological title, "the Book." From the view-point of education alone, no other volume can be so helpful. The style is masterful in its simplicity, directness, sweetness, harmony, and purity. The words are chiefly short. Thorough familiarity with it is a basis for an exceptional command of English. The best results may be obtained by reading it aloud. Apt quotations from the Bible, or references to it, are likely to strengthen an argument and to embellish a discourse. Lincoln, supreme as a letter-writer and an orator, acquired his style largely from reading the Bible.

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Using Too Many Words

Socially the long-winded person is a bore. You avoid him when you can. In business the use of too many words may become an actual detriment. A thought which can be expressed in a hundred words is obscured when embodied in five hundred. If you stick to the main point, you can drive it home. When you drag in a number of extraneous themes, they tend to distract the mind of the hearer or listener.

This drifting into aimless by-paths is a mark of muddled thinking. It wins the imputation of ignorance and stupidity—often to an undeserved degree. You recognize this kind of speaker: “I saw him—let me see—I think it was on a Tuesday—no, it was Wednesday. Or, maybe it was Monday. I don’t just exactly remember. It was at the corner of Fourth and Main Streets, I am sure of that, because it was in front of the Presbyterian Church—that is, not exactly in front, but almost”—and so on in maddening repetition and hesitation. He may know all about the electrical goods which he is selling, but you, at the time, can hardly suspect him of having definite ideas about anything.

Brevity is effective because it concentrates. It is a rifle-ball, while prolixity is a bird-shot. “A man of few words” is always a complimentary description. We associate

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garrulity with ineffectiveness. One who is given to ceaseless outflow of language can not accomplish as much work as the taciturn individual. The person who is very fond of talking is likely to give out information which he would better keep to himself. Silence and action seem to go together. Men acquire a reputation for ability and wisdom by not speaking overmuch. No one knows everything. Much speech must inevitably reveal streaks of ignorance; silence conceals.

A Key to the Best Society

Books on etiquette tell us the advantages of a pleasant voice, clear enunciation, proper pronunciation, and a good vocabulary. We readily agree that if you are to mingle socially with persons of good position, you must cultivate these habits and characteristics, should you be lacking in them. The inference is thoughtlessly drawn that if you are not asked to dinners and musicales in refined homes, you need not be so careful about the minor graces. But the standards which govern us in one relation of life must govern us to some extent in all. A man is freer in speech and action on the golf-course than at a White House reception. You can judge on the links, however, whether he would be out of place where gentility rules.

A man is not divided into his business, sporting and social selves. He is the same

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individual throughout. His business career is affected by how he conducts himself on a friend's yacht or in his drawing-room. Indeed, social connections are in many cases a financial asset. Young lawyers, physicians, architects, and brokers deliberately cultivate gay dancing-circles with the expectation of increasing the number of their clients, patients, or customers. Even where the advantage is not so direct and obvious, it may still be real. A bank-clerk, an accountant or young executive, is invited to good houses. This fact becomes known. It sets a kind of seal on him. His superiors know that this type of man has a certain self-confidence, an ease in meeting people and associating with them. He must have good manners and a command of standard English. Probably he has some intellectual gifts which have commended him to discriminating hosts. All such talents are valuable in business intercourse. They are recognized even by employers lacking in them—perhaps are especially recognized by this class. Such young men are, therefore, more likely to be entrusted with important tasks than their associates, tho these may have an equally good record in the office.

An easy manner and self-confidence are an aid in business as elsewhere. A command of proper speech is a help in attaining them. A man who is not sure of himself in this regard may be shy. He dares not speak when in

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polite circles, even if he has something worthwhile to say, for fear of making a blunder. He may be set down as a stick when he really has good ideas on his tongue's end but is afraid of revealing his educational shortcomings.

Business and society often mix. Deals may be discussed at the luncheon club or on the golf links. A man whose speech is somewhat uncouth is aware of it, and he does not feel quite at home where he is a bit of a misfit. Men may hesitate to invite him to dinner or to the country-club, where their wives and daughters and friends must meet him. He may make a good deal of money in spite of his language, but he would perhaps have better connections if not thus handicapped.

Public speaking is forced on nearly every American who raises himself out of the rut of mediocrity. Business conferences, trade conventions, luncheons, dinners, clubs of every kind, church-meetings, political or civic gatherings, afford opportunities or inflict tasks of this kind. A man who has a real message to deliver, and is equipped to deliver it gracefully and effectively, is at a great advantage. He is credited perhaps with greater financial or commercial acumen than he actually possesses. But nowhere else are defects in pronunciation and the choice of words so glaring

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as in a public speech. Even eloquence is ruined by them.

“He talks well,” is the comment, “but where did he get that Bowery accent and grammar?”

Lord Chesterfield is the classic authority on the value of good manners and good speech. He illustrated his doctrines in his own life. In his earlier years he bitterly abused George II. He was rewarded for this by a legacy of twenty thousand pounds from the dowager Duchess of Marlborough. Yet, later, he not only made his peace with his sovereign but rose so high in his esteem as to gain the offer of a dukedom. He was gifted with tact, of course, but this would not have availed him if he had not been a master of good language. Unfortunately, because Chesterfield was a selfish snob, people often associate the politeness which he advocated, with hypocrisy and double-dealing. No such connection is necessary. A man may be suave and polished and yet be really goodhearted. Indeed, when a man tries to make you feel pleased, he is more likely to be of a kind nature than one who offends you by his brusqueness.

You many think that arguments in favor of pure English, well constructed and well arranged, are superfluous. Who would assert that poor speech is not a blot and a blemish? Yet we find many people who are not sufficiently awake to the detriment they suffer

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from this cause. They know the shortcomings of their education, they realize that study may remedy this condition to a considerable extent, yet they make no effort for self-improvement. Rather more shocking is the plight of those who have college degrees and are nevertheless guilty of deplorable solecisms. A physician will say "Between you and I" and "He wrote to we doctors." Another professional man writes "I might of known better." The humorist may put "of" for "have" in the mouth of an illiterate ball-player and win a laugh, but in the letter of an educated man it is no laughing matter.

Some Pitfalls to Avoid

If you have an eye for such defects, you will constantly come across them in current literature. A New York newspaper, conspicuous for its high standards, displays in a headline the words "Much Data." You would suppose that even the linotype operator would know that "data" is the plural of "datum." "Much data" is as incorrect as "much shoes."

In a text-book on business-letter writing, a prize-selling letter is given. It begins:

"The other evening, while riding home with a friend, he suddenly jerked his newspaper aside.

"For some moments he did not speak."

The first sentence is a botch. As it stands

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it means that the subject, he, was riding home with a friend. The rest of the letter shows clearly that the writer was riding home with the friend who jerked the newspaper aside. The author of the book was conscious of the violation of grammar. He apologizes for it, or rather defends it, on the ground that the effect was more important than absolute correctness. He names two fellow authorities who agree with him.

The addition of two short words—four letters in all—would have avoided the difficulty. “While I was riding home with a friend” is the proper version. Just why this would be less effective than the other does not seem clear.

Incidentally the author of the text-book uses “effective” and “effect” in adjoining sentences. This is mere carelessness. The best writers are never afraid to repeat a word if emphasis or clearness demands it, but there is no such element in the case cited.

Perhaps this unfavorable criticism of two books which actually teach the use of good English may prove disheartening to the reader whose aim is self-improvement. “Who shall watch the watchman?” says the Latin proverb. How can a tyro hope to become competent when the masters themselves fail? Of course the lapses mentioned are exceptional. They should teach us that even the most expert must be constantly on guard.

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There should be encouragement also in the thought that Homer sometimes nods. This is not an incentive to nod ourselves but a consolation if we occasionally fall short in spite of our best efforts.

This discussion should fix in the mind a rule of grammar which is violated from time to time. That is, that a participle must modify a noun. "Sailing up New York harbor, the Statue of Liberty is seen." Literally the participle "sailing" modifies the Statue of Liberty; the statue it is that is sailing up the harbor. The writer meant to say: "Sailing up the harbor, we see the Statue of Liberty."

Even the King James version of the Bible is not free from error. The Book of Kings speaks of a "widow woman." To-day this would savor of the tenement house. If she be a widow, how can she be anything but a woman? But *widow* when used as an adjective formerly meant "bereft." This is archaic to-day.

"With what comparison shall we compare it?", from Mark, would also be tabu in an English examination.

"Whom do men say I am?" is also found in Mark. The nominative form "who" should be used with the verb "to be."

The Revised Version alters this second quotation to the following: "In what parable shall we set it forth?" The "whom" is

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changed to "who." But the "widow woman" in Kings remains.

A class of words that entraps many people is that by which an absolute quality, which can not be modified, is expressed. Thus "unique" means the only one of its kind. Yet one often reads of a "very unique affair" or of "the most unique display in the parade."

"Universal" covers everything. You can not intensify the application of it by prefixing "very." You can not cover more than everything if you add a whole dictionary to the word. An instructor in English composition writes of the "most universal fault." If it is universal, that is, if it applies to every object or person under consideration, it can not be more so or most so. The correct word to use is "common" or "general." In fact, the volume from which the phrase is taken expressly warns the reader against this locution.

"By the unanimous voice of all" recently appeared in print. "Unanimous" means that all agreed; "of all" is tautology.

Care should be used in fixing the subject of a verb. "John, as well as his brothers, are here." This may seem correct because several persons are here. In reality, only John is the subject of the verb. This should therefore be "is" instead of "are." "Together with" sometimes causes similar con-

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fusion. "John, together with his brothers, is here," is therefore right.

When Authorities Disagree

Two other problems are often discussed—the split infinitive and the "was given." Careful writers ordinarily do not separate the two parts of the infinite. They would not say "to wildly yell." Yet this locution can often be found in good literature. Some authorities get red in the face when it is condemned in their hearing. They go out of their way to employ it. There is no apparent reason for changing the usual arrangement. "To yell wildly" is quite as clear and effective from every point of view as the other.

Thus there is no advantage to be had by the separation. But there may be a loss. Many writers who have been trained by Charles A. Dana, Whitelaw Reid and other leading journalists, many educated persons in general, will set you down as an ignoramus. They will suppose not that you made a deliberate choice, knowing the situation, but that you were poorly trained in English. Yet the construction has been accepted as standard English for four centuries.

The "was given" construction is similarly decried and defended. "He was given a dinner" is the usual exemplification of it. Of course it was the dinner that was given, not the man. The dative case in the active voice

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was made the subject in the passive voice. Many of us were brought up to look on the "was given" locution as an utter barbarism. We consider it almost immoral. Yet you will find some persons well qualified to speak who take the opposite view. Your choice is simple. Avoid any practise which, in the minds of many, sets you down as slovenly of speech. There is such a thing as morbid anxiety about your linen. But surely this is better than untidiness.

"Partially" may be used when you mean "partly." There is authority for it. But the word also means "with partiality." "Partly" is shorter and avoids ambiguity. It is therefore preferable.

Should you say "the house is building" or "the house is being built?" The second and more common form is declared wrong by some because the past participle is used to describe an action not yet finished. However, the alternative suggested is also objectionable from that point of view, because the active participle is employed to denote a passive relation. The house is not really building; the carpenters and masons are building it. So one is as good as the other—and as bad.

"You had better come home" will get you into trouble with the purists. "Had" is in the past tense. The future is required. Therefore say or write, "You would better come home."

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The position of an adverb in a sentence is often incorrect. A New York newspaper says: "He only came to the circus three weeks ago." This would mean that the man came to the circus but did nothing else there. Of course the writer wanted to say that the man came to the circus only three weeks ago.

"Get" is often redundant. "I have got a dog" should be "I have a dog" if you wish merely to indicate possession. But if you want to emphasize that you obtained the dog by strong effort, the "got" is proper.

The past perfect tense offers a stumbling block even to some competent writers. "The ship was to have sailed" is an example of this which is to be seen not only in the newspapers but in magazines and books. Say simply: "The ship was to sail" if you mean that. "It was not necessary for you to have gone" is familiar. "To go" is the proper form to use here.

"May possibly" is a frequent tautology. Either "he will possibly" or "he may" expresses the idea. "May" and "possibly" both signify doubt, and one of them is superfluous.

Several faults can sometimes be corrected by breaking up a long sentence into two or more short ones. In conversation you do not try to tell a number of facts in one long sentence. You divide it. Long sentences are

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likely to be so involved that the meaning is not quite clear. They may be correct both grammatically and rhetorically and yet be difficult to follow. Senator William M. Evarts had the reputation of using in his speeches very long sentences which were nevertheless without fault. The average intellect is not, however, equal to this feat. Long sentences are usually meandering. The writer starts to make a simple statement; he thinks of something else and adds that; then something else suggests itself, and that too is saddled on the already overburdened sentence. Such discursiveness is usually the mark of a poorly trained mind. A writer for a technical magazine who knew his specialty better than he knew the English language, was dubbed by the editors "Old And Which." He would continually add excrescences to his sentences, joining them with "and which." When his articles were properly broken up, they were much improved.

The several clauses of a sentence may each fit in the narrative and yet be unfortunate in their unison. Thus a suburban correspondent wrote to his newspaper:

"The prisoner had but one arm and was unable to secure bail." The two statements should have been separated by a period.

An awkward sentence may result when "it" is used without an antecedent: "In the newspapers it says the circus is coming to-mor-

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row.” A better form is “The newspapers say—.”

A trained eye will catch such faulty sentences as “A fire was built and potatoes baked.” The “was” is understood in the second clause and is of course incorrect. Say “potatoes were baked.”

“I am coming up and see you sometime,” illustrates the improper substitution of “and” for “to.” “Coming up to see you” is the form which will not jar on a critical ear.

Care should be taken to have the verb agree with its subject and not with some other noun which may be nearer to it. “A basket of beautiful flowers were presented to the teacher” is an example of this. Here the error can readily be detected. When the sentence is long and involved, this mistake is more likely to escape detection.

In such a crude form as “I don’t want no potatoes,” the double negative will appear in the speech of only the ignorant. There are other forms which are more subtle, as “There isn’t but one garage in the town.” This should be changed to “There is only one garage.” “I can’t hardly believe it,” “He wouldn’t come only once,” illustrate the same class of fault. “But,” “hardly” and “only” here have a negative sense.

Tautology is a common error. Here are examples of it: “Autobiography of my life,”

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“and etcetera,” “repeat that again,” “rarely ever.”

“Texas is greater than any State in the Union” is a boast which puts that commonwealth in some foreign country. “Than any other State” brings it back where it belongs.

Indirect discourse has its pitfalls. For example, “He said it is raining.” It was raining when he spoke, but probably not when the statement was quoted. Hence the sentence should be “He said it was raining.” If you are quoting the original speaker’s words directly, however, the correct form is “He said: ‘It is raining.’ ”

Correct Pronunciation

Correct pronunciation is an intimate part of the use of good English. A dinner cooked by a French chef would be spoiled if not served properly. The dining-room, the linen, the china, the silver, the waiter must all be above reproach for the best enjoyment of food. You might have the good judgment of a professor of rhetoric and the vocabulary of Macaulay, and yet your speech be poor if it be not clearly and pleasantly uttered.

Usually a person who knows good English will speak it well. The conditions which are favorable to the development of one of these gifts will be favorable to the development of the other. We of course eliminate the dialect of that part of the country in which you

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were born and have chiefly lived. There are marked differences in the speech of educated people in the South, New England, the West, Canada, Scotland, Ireland, England. But there is here no question of good usage. The refinement is elemental, the peculiarities are on the surface. We are told that cultured New Yorkers alone have no dialect. The reason given is that the city is made up chiefly of people who come from other States and countries. Apparently the eccentricities of all are fused in this melting-pot into a metal without alloy.

Obviously the pronunciation used by persons of education in your part of the land is not a thing of which you should be ashamed. To many Southerners it is probably a source of pride. Tainted words are bad in whatever part of the country they are uttered. Good speech rings true everywhere. Pronunciation is no problem apart from refined language. It is true that the education which teaches you to choose good words and to use them properly, will lead you to clear speech. But there is still the problem of those who failed of going to college and are trying to make amends. We have seen that the reading of good authors, and the close and persistent study of text-books on grammar and rhetoric, will equip you with an adequate vocabulary and tell you what locutions to avoid.

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All this will be mental. It will not cure you of faulty enunciation.

Spelling, pronunciation, definition, etymology, all are involved in your study of words. So you should know where to accent such doubtful words as abdomen, ally, condolence, exquisite, gondola, harass, illustrate, inquiry, lamentable, precedence, vagary. You should study the following to learn the correct vowel sounds: Adonis, apparatus, amenable, apricot, biography, brooch, Cleopatra, creek, defalcate, genealogy (not geneology), mineralogy (not minerology), genuine, gratis, implacable, jugular, presentation, sacrilegious.

You might have all this book-knowledge and yet not speak clearly. Americans have a habit of talking hurriedly and running their words together. "You betcha," "I'm gonna," "I wanna go," "I dunno" are marks of a very large social class. It must be confessed, however, that some persons of better home influences are slipshod and rushing in their speech. "One hundred and twenty-first street" becomes something like "Hun'n twen foist street" in New York.

Actual instruction in elocution would be of advantage to very many who have no intention of speaking in public. Thus only can one learn the basic principles. But reading aloud from good books will do a great deal. It is not necessary to choose dull works. Rob-

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ert Louis Stevenson is not only famous for his style but has written essays and novels which many people find fascinating. The standard authors have long been read by tens of thousands solely for pleasure.

You might feel awkward about reading aloud to yourself in your room. An excellent arrangement is to find some one who, like yourself, wishes to acquire good enunciation, and then read alternately to each other. This prevents any tendency to hurry which you might have if you had no auditor. If there is a doubt about the meaning or pronunciation of a word, the dictionary should invariably be consulted. Discussion of the knowledge thus obtained will tend to fix it in the memory.

It has been estimated that the reading vocabulary is four-and-one-half times larger than the speaking vocabulary. To increase the number of words at your command it is therefore advisable, even necessary, that you go to books. Ordinary human intercourse is carried on with a surprizingly small number of words.

If you will give persevering study to speech in all its aspects, you will hear college graduates mispronouncing some of the difficult words to which attention has just been called. You will find lawyers and physicians and clergymen, yes, and college professors, jumbling their words together. Social status is

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not forfeited by minor derelictions such as these. But there are some faults which put you beyond the pale. An authority on etiquette declares that "no one who makes the pretense of being a person of education says: kep for kept, genelmum or gempmun or lay-dee, vawdvil or Eye-talian."

One would be tempted to add to this list: artitect, athaletic, gymminaisum, chrysanthem, crysanthum, pants, party for person, those kind, gentleman friend, "Is that right?" for "Is that true?" It is especially unfortunate that women attractive to the eye will spoil a good initial impression by using such phrases as "Wasn't that fierce?" and "My golf was certainly rotten to-day."

A good many people seem to think there is something aristocratic in the quasi-French pronunciation of the noun envelop, "Ongvelop." This word has been in the language for centuries. It is thoroughly naturalized and need not be considered foreign. Valet is also purely English by this time. More than one hundred and fifty years ago a lexicographer gave it the English pronunciation. Yet "vallay" is still to be heard occasionally.

Discrimination in the Use of Words

The use of pretentious instead of simple words does not indicate superior knowledge of English. Quite the contrary. Why write or say "She rendered a vocal solo" when

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you merely mean "She sang?" "Full of" conveys the same idea as "replete with" and is shorter. The small-town reporter tells how a gathering "partook of a collation" when the persons present simply ate supper. Perhaps this high-sounding circumlocution is not so bad as the colloquial "we had eats," but as Shakespeare said, "there is small choice in rotten apples." "Banquet" is a grandiloquent substitute for "dinner." If there are hundreds of guests, a sumptuous repast, elaborate music, expensive decorations, formal speeches, you might be justified in describing the affair as a banquet. But some careful writers would, even in these circumstances, find "dinner" the appropriate word.

A haughty woman might declare: "I would not demean myself by going to her house." "Lower" sounds less ambitious than the word she used, and happens to be correct. "Demean" is related to "demeanor" and not to "mean" or "meanness."

"Go to bed" is better than "retire"; "home" or "house" than "residence."

Quotation-marks are often used unjustifiably. An over free use of them ordinarily indicates poor training in the English language. Such words and phrases as bugbear, tomfoolery, bamboozle, skinflint, humbug, brace up, to cut a figure, milksop, parson, have a good standing, altho they are sometimes enclosed in quotation-marks. A restaurant

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describes itself on a big sign as "Vegetarian." What excuse there might be for the quotation-marks does not appear. There is no need thus to set off familiar phrases like "nipped in the bud" or "make a mountain out of a molehill."

Should one say "sweat" or "perspire?" The short, Anglo-Saxon word would naturally have the preference were it not considered coarse and vulgar. The late Professor Barrett Wendell of Harvard, famous for his daily theme course, insisted that "sweat" was better. He declared that the physiological function was inherently an unpleasant topic of conversation. It did not become less so by glossing it over with a soft word. If you stuck to "sweat" you would never use the word unless you were really warranted in mentioning the subject.

"Photo," "phone," "wire," "auto," and "cablegram" are set down as objectionable. "Photo" is certainly bad, but the others are so widely used that they are evidently on the road to legitimacy. Of course, language grows. Words that our ancestors regarded with abhorrence are now admitted into good society. "Cablegram" is decried because it combines a Latin and a Greek word. There comes a point where usage must override etymology. "September" is literally the seventh month, altho a shift in the calendar has put it into ninth place. Yet no one dreams of

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ostracizing it. "October," "November," and "December" have all gone through the same process of displacement.

"Transpire" falls incorrectly from the tongue or pen even of people who have studied Latin. It means "to breathe through," that is, "to become known," and not "to occur" or "to happen."

"Stop" in the sense of "stay" should be avoided. You stop at a hotel if you happen to meet a friend in front of it. When you are a guest, you stay at the hotel.

"Loan" and "lend" are used interchangeably by some persons. "Loan" is a good noun but a poor verb. If you say "I loaned him \$5" you may be condemned. "I lent him \$5" is beyond reproach.

"In our midst" excites merriment among the learned. "A distinguished visitor in our midst" suggests cannibalism to them.

This list might be extended indefinitely, but the aim here is chiefly to point out and to emphasize the important part which good English plays in business. Refined language will not only aid you to promotion and success but will enrich your life in other aspects.

PART II
THE LETTER IN BUSINESS

PART II

THE LETTER IN BUSINESS

BUSINESS was originally barter. One man exchanged fish which he had caught for the skin of a deer which his neighbor had killed. As civilization advanced, money was invented to make such transactions easier. Then it was found that trade was not necessarily limited to dealings in person. Thus business-letter writing began. But to this day much business is transacted by individuals who are face to face. Most of our retail trade is of this kind.

Manufacturers and wholesale houses employ salesmen to call on customers. Bonds and stocks are sold to investors by personal solicitation. Even then there is occasional exchange of the written word. The shoe-dealer corresponds with persons who owe him money, and with those to whom he is indebted for the goods that he sells. He may have complaints to make about orders that were misunderstood or goods that were not according to sample. The manufacturer frequently writes letters to his men on the road, to the jobber, to dealers who have bought goods from him. Brokers supplement the statements of their representatives with other statements in letter form.

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A large part of the business of the country is conducted by mail. Great quantities of merchandise are sold by the mail-order system. Education by correspondence has taken its place as an effective and helpful movement. In short, letter-writing plays an important part in the trade of the world. The typewritten page has certain obvious advantages over the spoken message.

The important factor of cost enters in every transaction, even as does the accuracy of the record. In his zeal a salesman may give a wrong impression about the goods he offers for sale, or about the terms on which they are sold. In such a case an unfortunate controversy may arise. Seldom would a letter written in cold blood have such result. Postage-stamps gain entry into the homes of thousands where personal calls would be precluded by expense. When many salesmen are scattered abroad, some have the advantage of ingratiating manners and address; others do not, and this militates against the effectiveness of their efforts.

When business is conducted by correspondence, letters may all come from, or be inspired by, the master-mind of the organization. Then it is he who makes the approach; it is his courtesy and his psychology that are brought to bear on the individual who is addressed.

Correspondence is the medium by which

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ideas are carried from mind to mind. It becomes a system of transportation, like a railroad. But it is much more than this, for the railroad merely gathers up tons of freight, whether coal or rails, and delivers them unchanged at the point of discharge. The value of ideas depends on the terms in which they are expressed. We may clothe a thought in words, but the manner of so doing may be so inadequate as merely to suggest a vital thing adorned in trappings—useless because ill-fitted to the subject or unsuited to the occasion. Words are not merely the garments; to be effective they must be the essence of the object itself. A project, or a purpose existing in the brain, becomes of value only when it can be placed before other people. If it be simple and deal merely with routine, the manner of explaining it may not be of much consequence, but when it is complex, or concerns large and important dealings, it is necessary to exert the utmost vigilance. Modern business is intensely competitive. Many stocks quoted in Wall Street pay no dividends, yet the corporations represented by them strain every nerve to get them into the money-earning division. Successful concerns strive energetically to increase their earnings. Letter-writing enters into most of these business operations. Surely, then, it is an important factor—a factor worth studying.

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Learning the Letter-Writing Art

Once convinced that business-letter writing is worth careful, continuous, and whole-souled attention, you will do something about it, and will continue to do something about it as long as you are in business. Probably out of a thousand executives you could not find one who would deny the importance of letter-writing. Yet if you had access to the carbon copies of their correspondence, you would probably find numerous violations of all the canons of excellence. If an individual of average intelligence, hitherto untrained in the craft, seriously attempts to train himself in it, he can do so to a high degree of efficiency by application and painstaking care. But the will-power must be there, and it must be diligently exercised.

All the high schools and colleges teach English composition; the business colleges lay special stress on correspondence. An improvement in commercial-letter writing has undoubtedly taken place in recent years. But there is still need of greater improvement. Abundant evidence of this may be found in current correspondence. A criticism of the commercial letters of a great American company, whose products have world-wide sale, was that their chief defect was flabby and incorrect expression. The author of this caustic criticism was employed to improve the

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quality of the correspondence. His task being to strengthen the construction and to correct the errors in grammar, if he showed a tendency to exaggerate the number or magnify the importance of such lapses, his views, unless supported by authority, might be considered captious.

But the reaction that he caused was significant. His criticism had been embodied in a brief letter, in which he pointed out the harm that these defects might work against the corporation. He urged subscription to a certain advanced course in business correspondence. His communication was sent to 350 of the Company's officials, some of whom were college graduates. Promptly 147 of them took the step that he urged. The usual reaction to criticism is vexation or anger; but in this case the charges were accepted, and the results showed them to have been well grounded in fact.

Many large corporations recognize the need of a better system of letter-writing, and engage expert help to provide it. Sometimes this help is temporary, and is dropped when the faults have been pointed out and corrected. In other cases a permanent post is created for a chief or supervising correspondent, or head of correspondence, or such other title as may be given to him. A competent official can earn his salary handsomely at this work. Frequently he finds startling

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blunders, not only in grammar but also in construction. Allowed to pass uncorrected, such defects have been known to depreciate the commercial standing of the corporations in whose correspondence they occurred, as well as to affect the company's income in divers ways. Some impair the good-will existing between the firm and the customer, thus causing loss of sales or at least unnecessary additional letter-writing in explanation or apology; others produce controversy and friction which plainly stated and pleasingly phrased letters would avoid. Both cause wasteful expenditure.

By mere systematizing of the correspondence processes, such a supervisor in some corporations can save considerable sums. He may find methods duplicated, too many people employed, lack of proper mechanical equipment, or wrong use of good machinery. Considered in the light of technical efficiency, such conditions warrant the employment of the services of the supervisor. The chief gain, however, comes from improved contact with the outside world; the creating of stronger sales pull; the simplifying of epistolary negotiations, and the spreading of feelings of friendliness and good-will.

Let us consider the money aspect further; for, after all, business is conducted primarily to make money. We see that a postage-stamp costs only the tiniest fraction of the expense

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that would be incurred by sending a salesman on a journey of, say, several hundred miles. That is the chief reason for writing, whenever feasible, instead of going in person. But letters cost money, too. So many of them are sent out that the expense incurred amounts to a surprising sum of money. Careful computation has been made of the average cost of the letters mailed by certain typical concerns. This includes, of course, not merely the postage-stamp and paper, but also the pay of the dictator and the stenographer, and the incidentals. The range of expense was from 11 to 49 cents apiece. Multiply the actual sum by the number of letters sent out in a year, and you will realize that the cost of correspondence is an item of some importance on a balance-sheet. From this fact we may derive two suggestions—the first, that care will prevent waste; the second, and more weighty, that, as the expense incurred is great, every effort must be made to get the greatest possible results from it. It may then be taken for granted that, in any business, the writing of carefully composed and correct letters is well worth persistent and painstaking attention.

The Importance of Clarity

Next, let us consider the elements that contribute to the making of a successful use of this factor. Clearness we should un-

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doubtedly place first. Language was created to express thought. When it fails to do this, it is obviously at fault—at fault as much as a shipper is when he fails to notify the Express Company, through which he ships perishable goods, that the shipment must be kept at an even temperature. He can not hold the Express Company responsible for damage that has arisen through his own neglect. Similarly, language can not be expected to make up the deficiencies of muddled thought. The idea must be quite clear in the writer's mind before it can be expressed by letter in such a way as to convey a definite and unmistakable message. The dictator knows what he wants to say, but frequently fails to say it. Haven't you received letters that gave evidence of thought imperfectly expressed or of a hazy understanding?

Clear language is the instrument of clear thinking; but obscure language, upon occasion, also may be an aid in that direction. A man and his secretary may believe themselves to be in command of all the facts in a situation, and may think they know just what conclusions will be drawn from the letter they are preparing; yet the man, when dictating, may fail to control all the lines of thought, and so fail to cover the subject adequately. Later, when he and his secretary read and re-read the dictated letter, they can see for them-

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selves that its meaning is not perfectly clear. In such a case nothing is to be done but to analyze what has been written, and find out exactly what should have been said. After doing this it will be an easy matter to say what must be said clearly and effectively. Thus do words serve as a check on thought, and enable us to test its soundness.

How to Begin a Business Letter

Let us assume, then, that your ideas are now crystal-clear in your mind. How are you to begin to set them on paper? In ordinary correspondence a plan of direct approach is usually most effective. Formerly, the initial stress was laid on "acknowledging the receipt of your esteemed favor of the 15th instant," but this is no longer the best usage. There should, of course, be a reference to the letter received (if there was one) that requires a reply; this is courteous, even if it be merely for convenience—so that the person addressed may look up the original communication if necessary. But to-day such mention is merely incidental. The immediate purpose is to establish at once business relations with the individual or firm written to.

A business man who attributes much of his success to his letter-writing puts the situation thus: "*Your first sentence should be a very positive statement covering the essence of the communication.*" Note the word "es-

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sence." The opening sentence should not try to tell too much of the story. It should be as compact as possible. It should treat the elements of the situation in plain terms. It should be clear-cut and incisive. Ample space remains for particulars. These come naturally into the superstructure. The foundation must be solid masonry—masonry strong enough to support all that is to be built upon it. You do not need decoration and tracery here. They have their places, and may be added later.

It is sometimes interesting to study the initial sentences of important articles in a good newspaper. When the principle outlined here is carried out, you will note how effective it is. For example, one man kills another in a crowded court-room. He shoots him to avenge a sister who has been wronged. An unskilled reporter might begin to tell the story by trying to crowd as much information as possible into the first sentence. He might tell not only what happened, and where and how and why, but might give also the names, ages, addresses and occupations of the principals of the affair.

A more effective way to begin is this: "One man shot another in the Court of General Sessions yesterday. Thus the slayer avenged his sister's honor. He was—" and so on.

• An examination of the headlines of a news-

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paper will often help you to get this idea of an initial summary. Indeed, the copy-editor may do his work so skilfully that you need not read the body of the article at all if the subject does not particularly interest you. But this rule does not apply in all cases. In fact, letter-writing can not be held down to ironclad practise except as to actual mistakes. There is always scope for individuality. In letters that are purely for the purpose of selling, and are not called forth by inquiry, a short, crisp question may be the best beginning.

“Do you figure the profit and loss account of your health each year?” This might be an effective opening for selling a health inventory service.

In one class of letters the bald, rugged statement of what you are trying to bring about would be much out of place: namely, in those answering complaints which you feel to be partly or wholly unwarranted. Your first reaction to these is of disagreement and opposition. You may feel vexed or even indignant. But such emotions are not to be put on paper. There is sometimes satisfaction in telling a man just what you think of him. It may be fun to squelch him, but costly fun. While this might give you personal gratification, it would harm your employer's business. His object (we will personify it if, as is probable, it is a corporation) is simply to make

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money—not to indulge emotions however righteous. He wants to sell his goods to his prospect, and to win the prospect's goodwill, so that future sales may be easier. Thus your duty is solely to get your prospect into a state of mind where he will forget that he has a grievance, and will come to regard your firm with favor. Avoid controversy, for there is nothing so foolish as fighting, and sometimes the winner comes out worse off than the loser. Controversy does not pay in business.

Getting the Other's View-Point

Here we come upon a principle that is fundamental in letter-writing, and that also applies generally in personal contact: *The "you" attitude makes the most friends.* Put yourself in the other man's place and see what effect your words are going to have upon him. Ask yourself what kind of communication would be most likely to induce you to continue friendly dealings. This is the "you" attitude. It is a source of power in business.

In your first reply use oil rather than vinegar. The opening sentence should be sympathetic. You understand how annoying a delay or misunderstanding or disappointment is. You have experienced these yourself. We all have. Then perhaps you will use some mollifying words, and so avoid friction.

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In the ordinary letter you have in the addressee a neutral or even a friendly state of mind. Therefore, a statement of your conclusions, early in your letter, may arouse antagonism. But when you are dealing with a complaint, you should not begin by saying that your views are the direct opposite of those of your correspondent. By so doing you merely rouse resentment. Ability to reason is one of God's gifts to man, but this faculty is likely to be subordinated when the emotions are excited.

Under such circumstances as have been outlined, it is usually wisest to take up a statement of the undisputed facts. They should be set down as reasonably and calmly as possible. Whenever possible, they should be considered from the other man's point of view. Then you can gradually reason the thing out with him, leading steadily up to the conclusion that his position is not justified after all.

In scientific terms this is called the inductive method of reasoning. It begins with facts, compares them, classifies them, and reasons from the particular fact to the general, and so arrives at a conclusion. The opposite method is the deductive. This starts with the general facts, and marshals these in support of the particular fact to reach the conclusion. Our ordinary processes of thought are along deductive lines. True science operates on the other principle. The difference is em-

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phasized in many a popular detective story or melodrama. On the one hand there is the police expert who promptly picks out the guilty individual; on the other, the hero, who is a counterpart of Sherlock Holmes, patiently makes thorough examinations of the premises, following all clues with an open mind. Finally the facts themselves unerringly solve the problem.

"The customer is always right" is a maxim widely used in hotel management and retail trade. It is based on the idea that to please a customer is preferable to vexing him. In a hotel, where complaints generally concern the conduct of some employee, an apology is frequently the easiest way out, irrespective of whether or not blame is warranted. Even if the conduct could be justified, economy of time would often be gained by admitting a fault. In this business, more perhaps than in others, the atmosphere of cordiality and complaisance is a profitable asset.

In a retail establishment, tho the customer is clearly in the wrong, and money is lost by yielding, the management may still think that the customer's good-will is worth the sacrifice. But in business at large, a rule of always deferring to the purchaser is quite out of the question. Too much profit would be lost. A reputation for softness would multiply the unreasonable demands. The skilful letter-writer has the opportunity to prevent

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this. He must try to ride two horses at once. He must retain or regain favor, yet maintain the righteousness of his cause.

Of course, some complaints are warranted. Then there is nothing to do but to apologize, and to make necessary reparation. A frank admission of error or wrong-doing takes the sting out of the customer's grievance at once. He has knocked you down, as it were, but he scorns to strike a fallen foe. The advantage being all with him, he realizes his superiority. He regrets the occurrence, and is willing to smooth the way to future dealings. This may not be exactly agreeable to you, but it is fitting that mistakes be punished.

A successful man declares in private that he sometimes ends a controversy by admitting he is wrong when he knows very well that he is right. The hurt is only to his feelings, his self-respect, and he is big enough not to mind that. He is intent upon the ultimate advantage. The individual who occasionally acknowledges a lapse or shortcoming is more likely to make friends and to sell goods than the comedian in one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas who sang:

"I never yet made a mistake—
I'd like to for variety's sake."

A straight business letter may sometimes begin with the facts in the case, then lead,

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step by step, to the conclusion. This method has proved effective, particularly in sales-letters that are sent out in large numbers to people with whom you have not had dealings before. The opening sentence must arouse interest in the article offered, and act as a lure to further reading. Then make general statements gradually building up your case, until finally you reach the clinching-point of your argument. This should not merely convince the reader that the article offered for sale is good, but should impel him to the action of signing the order-blank.

The Letter That Gets Results

Commonly there is one dominant idea in a letter. The object with circulars is to make a sale. The individual missive may have a similar intent, or it may deal with any one of a thousand subjects. So when you write it, you should have in mind the purpose that you want to achieve. You may start out by stating it, or you may lead up to it gradually. In either case, it must hold the dominant place in your thought. All else must be subordinated to it.

Legal questions usually have the same characteristic. A lawyer will approach his subject from various angles, and will quote different authorities on each principle that he lays down. Apparently one line of reasoning is as important as another. But really, there

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is a supreme point at issue. It must be made to stand out above the rest. It must be impressed on the judge's mind. All else must be subordinated.

Many factors go to making the perfect business letter—clearness, unity, courtesy, promptness, suitable language, good psychology, care in the mechanical production. The chief consideration is that it shall secure favorable action. A business is established to earn money. If it fail in this, its success from other points of view is wasted. A corporation may beautify a city with its offices and factories; may be a great civic asset; may contribute executives who are active and able in public affairs; but all this avails little, from the stockholders' point of view, if there are no cash dividends.

Similarly, a letter is written to sell goods, to settle a complaint, to collect a debt, to encourage a salesman, to establish good-will. It must be judged by whether it succeed or fail in what it sets out to do. Artistic typewriting, fine stationery, Chesterfieldian courtesy, Stevensonian language will not counterbalance lack of power to produce conviction. Often the difference between a letter that causes the desired action and one that does not is subtle. We can see this quality also in persons around us. One man has a good presence, talks well, is industrious, makes friends, but in business somehow he just

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misses success. Another may be handicapped by externals, and yet gain a commanding place. History provides an analogy in the comparison of Cicero with Demosthenes. When the Roman had finished one of his classical addresses, the crowd said: "What a wonderful orator Cicero is!" After Demosthenes ended his denunciations of the Macedonian king, the mob shouted: "Let us go and fight Philip!"

The French indicate such a condition by their expression, "*succès d'estime*"—indifferent success. They apply this to a play or book that receives a modicum of praise from a few superior people, but fails to win the public. A drama is written to draw crowds to its performances. If empty chairs greet it, the author has not hit the mark. A letter that could be described as a "*succès d'estime*" is futile. It's like a company of foreign chorus girls who arrived in New York. They had been chosen for their beauty, but they didn't look it.

Perhaps too much stress can not be laid on the principle that a letter is to be judged chiefly, if not wholly, by its effectiveness in winning assent or inducing action. This should be kept foremost in mind even when minute attention is paid to the numerous details to be treated later. The city editor of a New York newspaper used to say to his men: "A general is engaged to win battles. A re-

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porter is engaged to get news. If a general loses his battles, nothing else counts. If a reporter comes back empty-handed, that's the end of him."

Early in the Civil War, Lincoln was sorely tried by generals who had the Ciceronian qualities of excellence but somehow never won battles. Then a grim figure came to the fore in the West. Donelson and Vicksburg proved that Grant was of a different type. He was the kind that went ahead and did things.

The famous preacher, Whitefield, knew how to use words so as to spur to action. He was raising money to build an orphan asylum in Georgia. Benjamin Franklin urged that Philadelphia was the proper site for it. When he went to hear a sermon by the gifted visitor, he determined he would give nothing toward this, to him, unwise charity. He had some copper money in his pocket, a few silver dollars, and five gold pistoles. As the orator waxed eloquent, Franklin relented and decided to contribute his coppers. The plea became more moving, and the philosopher made up his mind to give the silver as well. But, when the discourse was finished, the hard-fisted Franklin dropped all his coins into the collection-box.

The Mechanical Aspect

This central purpose of letter-writing is not

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the whole matter, however. There remain many other aspects. They are of minor importance from one point of view, but of major importance from another. No single one of them will sell a bill of goods. But each one of them may detract from the convincing power of a communication. Let us consider the first of these—the mechanical aspect. It is the first thing that strikes the eye when you unfold the sheet. Stenographers and typists are trained in forms of superscription, address, alinement, and spacing, and as to punctuation, spelling, and the general technique of their calling. They are, however, likely to need supervision until you are entirely assured of their accuracy and trustworthiness. After all, a principal is responsible for the acts of his agents. If a poorly drafted letter leaves your office, the reader knows that you did not typewrite it; but he holds you to blame, nevertheless. He wonders if your business is as slack in other departments as in this one. Perhaps a feeling of mild disgust is aroused that makes it just a little harder for you to attain your objective.

A typewritten page may be beyond criticism in its details and yet lack beauty as a whole. It should be considered as a picture in a frame. There should not be too much white space above or below the typing. If the words are few, a half-sheet of paper may

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be used, or the message may be "blocked" in the center of the page, with margins equally wide on all four sides. An excellent composition, to use the art phrase, may thus be produced.

Correctness in the writing of the names and addresses, in spelling, and in punctuation, is generally assumed. The stenographer is trained to that, and expected to do these minor things properly, just as the shoemaker is expected to know how to resole shoes. But experience has revealed that there is a great deal of carelessness in transcription. For instance, a man wrote the same letter to a number of business houses. His name was printed correctly on his letterhead, yet out of ninety-seven replies that he received, his name was misspelled on forty.

A large Eastern university was raising a fund for a war memorial, and by letter urged its graduates to subscribe. Some time afterwards, a graduate who had subscribed to this fund received a letter from his class organization, and another from his State alumni club, both urging him to make a gift. He was annoyed. Inasmuch as his check had been sent, he resented being classed among the slackers. Another thought was that, if the "drive" organization was so careless in this small matter, it might be making a botch of more important particulars. The supplemental circulars had both originated from the central

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organization, for they called attention to the number of his classmates and of his State associates who had contributed. It would have been simple to consult the list of subscribers, and to refrain from bothering them further. Had this been done, stamps and stationery would have been saved; this waste, however, was the least of the evils.

People from time to time receive follow-up letters after they have bought the goods. This is likely to displease them out of all proportion to the small trouble involved in throwing the annoying missive into the wastebasket. Satisfaction with the article bought may be decreased by this kind of mismanagement. An individual wrote to a health-resort for rates and information. These were so satisfactory that he promptly packed up his bags, and his golf-clubs, and journeyed to the delightful spot. In a few days a follow-up letter from the hotel was forwarded to him from his office. As he was enjoying the place greatly, he did not pay any attention to it; but a second letter was distinctly annoying, and a third sent him to the office with a vigorous complaint. Of course, he was suavely informed that an employee had made a mistake which wouldn't happen again. He wasn't indignant at some slip of a girl earning perhaps \$15 a week. His ire was aroused against a big corporation—the success of which depended chiefly on the favorable im-

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pression it made on its guests—for not properly supervising its routine.

A richly endowed foundation of New York, extensively interested in education, sent out a questionnaire to colleges and universities. In this the word “principal” was misspelled “principle.” In an individual letter this might not have mattered greatly, but in an inquiry that was sent out in great numbers, the fault was hardly excusable.

All this shows that vigilance in overseeing the details of correspondence should never be relaxed. Processes that are repeated, with little variation, day after day, usually lead to a rut. Even after a reorganization that puts every worker in a plant on his mettle for a time, the spirit of slackness eventually returns. Some corporations combat this spirit by issuing bulletins that periodically call attention to faulty practises. Others occasionally have conferences in which carbon-copies of letters sent out are read and commented on. One difficulty about the latter procedure is the chance of arousing ill-feeling. Efforts to correct inefficiency of any kind in business are likely to have such an effect. The exercise of tact is essential. If, for instance, the highest official present begins by pointing out a slip in his own correspondence, he paves the way for a gracious acceptance of other fault-finding. A good course to follow is to call attention to merits as well as to lapses. This

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has a double effect. The praise mollifies the man who has been or later will be blamed. Then, too, attention is called to the positive as well as to the negative aspects of letter-writing. Thus, success is shown to mean not merely the avoidance of pitfalls, but the development of constructive qualities as well.

The organizers of the Boy Scout movement understood this principle. Their program is not negative but positive. The Scout's attention is fixed on things that he should do, and not on those he should not do. His laws call for deeds—"Do's," *not* "Don'ts."

Inspiration to unceasing vigilance and effort may come from the reflection that, after all, you are working primarily for yourself. It is important to your employer that your letters be written as well as possible, but it is even more important to you. Your slackness will not seriously harm the corporation; you are merely one of its many workers; but such delinquency may perhaps grievously affect your own future. So you must convince yourself that the job is worth doing not merely well, but supremely well. You read the letter you have just dictated. It does not sound exactly right. You know you could improve it if you took the time; but you see that no money is directly involved. You think to yourself that, maybe, it does not make any real difference. Or perhaps the typist has been slipshod, and correction is not

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possible unless the letter is rewritten. You feel sorry for her, and so, whatever the case, the letter is signed and mailed.

Quite possibly that particular letter will accomplish its purpose just as well as if it had been revised. Perhaps the reader registers no particular disgust; but you have injured yourself, and impaired your chance for advancement. The next time a similar question arises, you will probably hesitate less about sending out a letter in a muddled form. The habit will grow and become fixed. If, on the other hand, you take the pains to do the task over again, you will inflict on yourself the sort of punishment that you will remember. You will feel that another blunder means re-dictation. You are, therefore, more eager than before to turn out your best work. Clearness and accuracy become a fixed habit with you, instead of slovenliness, which would have resulted from following the other practise.

Avoiding Long-Windedness

Dictation is not always easy at first. As you read your kindergarten attempts, you may be dismayed at the long-windedness, discursiveness, and cloudiness of thought. It may be worth your while, in the beginning, to think out your letters and write them by hand. When you have acquired skill in doing this, you can then take to dictation. But persons who have dictated their thoughts to stenog-

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raphers for years, even, find it advisable to go back to the pen when a letter of particular delicacy, and unusual importance, is to be written. The extra trouble may spell the difference between failure and success.

Shortly before his death Jacob A. Riis, the noted social worker and author, declared that writing for the newspapers and magazines had declined in quality in his day. Previously all work had been written by hand. Then the typewriter had replaced the pencil and pen. It was his opinion that the mechanical operation made changes more difficult. Improvement in construction and arrangement, and in the choice of words, was thus at a discount. A generation of reporters that had never written by hand might not realize this. When the time comes for a great, effective effort, the experiment of setting down your words yourself is always worth trying.

When form-letters are to be drafted, or a circular is to be composed, obviously ample time should be spent on the task. When a letter is to be used thousands of times, it is of far greater importance than one ordinary letter. Here handwriting would naturally come into play, altho some men are able to typewrite or to dictate without loss of effectiveness in their composition. Letters designed for multiplication will repay all the labor spent on them. Some persons find it

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helpful to read aloud any composition with which they are taking special pains. The ear seems to act as an additional censor. Incongruity, awkwardness, or lack of clearness, that escaped the unaided vigilance of the eye, may then be revealed.

In no form of letter is care more essential than in applications for work. There may be a dozen persons seeking the position. Save in their written words, all are on an equal basis. The award is offered to them. Your task is to stand out of the mob—to get, so to say, into the center of the stage. Perhaps the qualifications that you offer are not superior to those of some of your competitors. Your one hope is to present these qualifications to the best advantage, and so to make your individuality stand out. Too few words will not tell your story properly; too many may disqualify you.

As in solving so many problems involving human relations, you can do best by putting yourself in the other man's place. Having written your letter as carefully as you know how to do it, you read it, preferably aloud. Then you estimate what impression it would make on you if you were the addressee. He is not interested in your needing the position. That is understood. But he would be likely to take particular notice if you placed his business in the limelight, and showed him why you especially wish to connect yourself

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with it. Obvious or extravagant flattery would defeat its own end. Deftness in linking your qualifications and preferences with the nature and standing of his enterprise would be most effective.

A college student, just before his graduation, wrote to a large rubber company in Akron to apply for a place in the sales department. He explained that he thought his studies in chemistry and business administration would be useful in selling tires. He had had experience as a salesman, for he had paid his way through college largely by canvassing. In all his four years at college, he wrote, he had never missed a recitation except through illness. He wanted to get into the rubber business because it seemed to him to have large opportunities for growth. Then he added:

“Frankly, if you are looking for the type of man who slaps the dealer on the back, calls him by his first name, and tells him funny stories, I would not suit you. But if you want some one who will learn your business thoroughly, who will be energetic and faithful, who is ambitious to get ahead, then I believe I can meet your requirements.”

Many young college men were seeking work with this company, but he was one of the winners. His letter was not stereotyped. It had a flavor of the applicant's personality. His admission of his limitation showed his

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honesty. As a matter of fact, the hail-fellow-well-met type of salesman is not in such favor as he used to be. A college man who is thoroughly conversant with all the details concerning the goods he is selling, who uses correct language, who dresses in quiet taste, who does not go beyond his instructions, is now thought to be superior to the noisy, slang-scattering individual who was formerly regarded as the ideal salesman.

Persistence and Courtesy

Persistence is a vital quality. The city editor of a New York newspaper noted that of numerous applicants for work as a reporter, few called or wrote more than once. If a newspaper sends a man out to get certain information, he is not supposed to return to the office after one unsuccessful effort. An experienced reporter perseveres until he gets the news, or until he is reasonably assured that his quest is hopeless. A candidate for a job who quits after the first refusal is apparently not made of the stuff of which good news-gatherers are made. The city editor, therefore, was on the watch for an applicant who would call and call, or write and write, half a dozen times. Up to last accounts this exceptional individual had not revealed himself. Meanwhile, of course, some of the job-seekers had been placed, but there is always

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a large regiment, if not a brigade, of journalistic unemployed.

The follow-up letters, for such they really are, should avoid giving offense. They may say frankly that the writer is not accustomed to relinquish an undertaking after the first rebuff; that he knows that good things in this life do not often come in a hurry. This unusual course is likely to attract attention to himself, and to win for him an interview when an opening occurs.

Where the application has been made in person, and no decision announced, a letter, not urgent in terms, may help the case. You may thank the employment manager, or other official whom you saw, for the opportunity of talking with him. Further, you can suggest that the job looks all the more desirable to you since your contact with its representative. You can close with a pleasing hope that you will have a chance to become part of the organization. Anything that looks like forcing action, or the undue pushing of yourself, should be avoided. You can judge by reading your letter aloud whether it will make an impression favorable to you.

Courtesy is the next quality to be considered. The bloom on the peach has no taste, but the fruit would be sadly deficient without it. Goods are presumably bought on their merits, yet many sales owe more to pleasant words than to logic and facts. A

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lubricant lessens friction; courtesy does much more. It abolishes friction and, besides, adds definite horse-power to a motor. Every one will agree that suavity and politeness are excellent helps in business. Yet in actual practise much harshness and uncouthness are shown. It is not necessary here to prove that courtesy is valuable, but so to emphasize its importance that it will not be neglected.

Man is a rational animal, of course, but his emotions play a great part in his decisions. He usually adopts his father's political and religious affiliations. He is greatly influenced by association of ideas, altho there may not be the slightest logic in it. He likes anything that will make him contented with himself. When he is going to make an important purchase, he considers values first. But, without knowing it, he allows himself to be much affected by trivial externals. If he plans to buy a home, he compares the different offerings on a monetary basis. His decision, however, is influenced—tho he is not conscious of this—by the personality of the salesmen with whom he is dealing. An agreeable manner, a good appearance, a sympathetic insight, a smart car, will perhaps win where the balance of solid advantage may lie the other way.

It should be borne in mind that, in a large part of all business transactions, there is small choice as to the actual value of com-

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peting merchandise. A dozen grocers, shoe-dealers, tailors, haberdashers, have practically the same lines and the same prices. Therefore, the personal element will often be decisive. In letters, the same holds true. Actually, you may not have a better article than your competitors have. The friendly, ingratiating tone of your literature may prove to be the added weight that inclines the scales in your favor.

A comparison between Roosevelt and Lincoln along this line will be illuminating. Roosevelt had gifts to an extraordinary degree for the making of a popular idol. He was honest, courageous, frank, intellectually able, with a strong love for righteousness. His physical vigor was a trump card. In variety of interests, he was remarkable. His dynamic energy continually kept him doing things that filled the front pages of the newspapers. With friends and followers he was cordial and considerate. But any opposition maddened him. A disagreement about facts sent his opponent into the Ananias Club. His "big stick" won the site for the Panama Canal without a payment to Colombia. He was the beau ideal of militant aggressiveness.

Yet, when Roosevelt ran for President the last time, he carried only a few States. The American government later paid the Republic of Panama \$12,250,000 for her Canal-Zone rights. Any one who held opinions contrary

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to Roosevelt's was to him a public enemy, to be fought ruthlessly. He remains a picturesque figure in American history, just as is Andrew Jackson, but he never lived up to his best opportunities.

Lincoln was a different man. When, as President, he called on Stanton at the War Secretary's home one evening, Stanton calmly went to bed. Imagine Roosevelt's outburst if this had happened to him. Lincoln, after waiting an hour and learning the truth, quietly went home, saying that he would hold Stanton's horse for him if, by so doing, he could help to win the war.

Lincoln was not mushy. He would go to great lengths to conciliate an enemy, or, what was more difficult, a friend. But when he reached a place where he must sacrifice a principle or fight, he fought. His famous letter to Horace Greeley is in point. The editor was a great power—a man whose services to the Union had been preeminent. Lincoln had to oppose him on the question of an early emancipation. The President did not begin by blustering, or by threatening membership in the Ananias Club. On the contrary, he frankly paid tribute to Greeley's leadership. Then, in a series of short, clear words, he completely refuted the editor's views. His courteous preamble made the blow all the more telling. Lincoln was a supreme letter-writer. He wrote to accomplish

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some purpose. His abounding kindliness, his skill in attaining his ends, make him a model to be studied to this day.

The Art of Winning Good-Will

A man sent a gift of money to a band of women who were conducting a day-nursery. He was not trying to sell any goods or to accomplish anything ulterior. It would have been enough to send the check, but he took the "you" attitude. He tried to look at the transaction from the point of view of those devoted women. He wrote to them, telling them how much the community owed to their unselfishness, how much people appreciated their labors. He made their work, and not his check, the chief thing. When his letter was read to them, some of the women wept. By common accord they took up the doxology: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!" They were spurred to renewed zeal for the nursery. Probably the letter pleased them quite as much as did the check.

No, this was not a business letter, but the incident illustrates the advantage of courtesy. It is just as advisable to be gracious in conferring a favor as in asking for one—and easier. To try to win good-will, only when you see a dollar peering around the corner at you, is short-sightedness. You should be big enough to build broadly. Some friendly letters will be wasted, but the habit of always

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writing them will establish a reputation which will be to your ultimate advantage.

All this is based on the narrow policy of self-interest. You will get further if the courtesy is in your heart, and not merely in your words. A letter that breathes genuine friendliness will prove more effective than one that simply reflects desire for profit. Indeed, the habit of an agreeable tone in correspondence is likely to react favorably on one's manners. It may even affect character for the better.

A certain type of man joins lodges, luncheon clubs, and other social organizations chiefly or wholly as an aid to selling life insurance, or clothes, or whatever else he may be offering. He is often overeager to use his fraternal contacts for business ends. Somehow he is likely to betray his self-interest. His associates can readily distinguish veneer from solid mahogany. He creates aversion instead of winning favor. He is the kind of man who writes letters in which courtesy is only skin-deep. He should learn that only genuine coin rings true.

Social letters are outside the sphere of this praxis, but their study will help you to cultivate the idea of friendliness. In them there is no effort to sell something. They are planned solely to please, to aid in making human intercourse agreeable. The practises and

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principles governing them will aid in imparting a proper spirit to money-making letters.

Many business-houses receive mail that seems fit only for the waste-basket. When a firm dealing in stocks and bonds is favored with an obviously trivial letter, badly spelled and written on soiled paper, there seems no need of paying attention to it. But manufacturers of cheap products that have a nation-wide sale do well to observe the rule of courtesy that every letter requires an answer.

A food-factory whose products are advertised widely received in one year 80,000 letters that had no direct connection with sales. They dealt chiefly with questions of diet, but embraced also an endless variety of other subjects. Every one of these letters received a prompt, painstaking, friendly reply. This apparently superfluous mail was considered a valuable asset. It proved that the advertising had brought the the products to the attention of these correspondents, and aroused their interest. It had caused investigation. Sales-resistance had in part been broken down. The prospects were a selected lot, certain, if properly cultivated, to yield a far greater amount of business than an equal number of persons chosen at random would yield. That many of them lived in the backwoods and were uninformed was immaterial. They would be more likely to be impressed by a formal reply, agreeably written, and all the more

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likely to tell their neighbors about this pleasant contact, and about the information which they had received. It was not only courtesy to reply to these 80,000 communications; it was good business.

Value of a Prompt Answer

Is there any need to urge promptness in letter-writing? To judge by one's experience in business, there is. Only a part of the mail which you receive every day is of immediate importance. In some instances, there is a good reason for delay, but usually it could be and should be avoided. An old motto runs: "Anything that is worth doing, is worth doing well." A companion to it would be: "Anything that is worth doing, is worth doing promptly," but "*Do it now!*" is a better one.

If you receive an inquiry that may lead to a large order, you do not set it aside for a day or two. You get such information as is necessary and mail your reply at once. You know that if you delay or dally a competitor may outbid you. A seemingly unimportant letter may have possibilities of great advantage. If you delay answering it for two or three days, you may lose a chance to make a favorable impression. A man, eager to buy, writes to you while the notion to buy is intense. His ardor has time to cool if he does not get an immediate reply.

Procrastination in letter-writing may be

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symptomatic of general disorder. In the universe, a man is but a unit. If he be slovenly about his person, he is probably solvenly about his home. If he be habitually slack about his correspondence, he is likely to be slack about other phases of his business. And even if his fault is a lone one, persons who know nothing but that shortcoming about him will infer that he has other faults. A firm or corporation has no entity in itself. It is merely the sum total of the individuals who compose it. If the head of a department is commonly in arrears with his mail, the reflection is not on him, but on his company. A single black sheep spreads splotches of dark wool on the white fleece of the rest. The organization as a whole suffers.

Every enterprise is more or less knit together. It assumes a general tone. Similar habits and usages are likely to run through the whole establishment. If the ideals of promptness about letter-writing are low, the trouble may spread to the shipping and to other departments. On the other hand, quick response to the correspondence is likely to react favorably on other departments of the business.

When a letter can not be answered for several days, because information must first be gathered, a brief and pleasant note of acknowledgment and explanation should be forwarded. Sometimes this affords an oppor-

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tunity for propaganda, but, at the least, it prevents irritation over what might seem a needless or a discourteous delay.

Promptness, like courtesy, is cheap. A man prided himself on his success in having delightful vacations at small expense. "Anybody," he argued, "can go to a fashionable hotel and have all kinds of entertainment by spending a lot of money. It takes a clever man to have the same amount of fun at a quarter of the cost." Any firm can enlarge its business by lavishness in advertising or by sending out more salesmen. The important thing is to secure the same result with no extra outlay of money. Letter-writing costs no more well done than ill done, and brings better returns.

Any one can be courteous and prompt. To write a really able letter may be beyond the power of some correspondents. Somehow their mental equipment may be lacking. They can, however, show a kindly spirit in their dictation, and are not handicapped by an inability to send out their answers at once.

Simple Words Usually the Best

The best language is none too good for commercial correspondence. Mention is sometimes made of "Business English" as if it were a dialect, and it is, but not a debased off-spring of literary English such as dialect is supposed to be by the ill-informed. A par-

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ticular profession, calling, or trade may have its own technical terms, but words of the same type—that is, plain terms—serve to order goods and to write the Gettysburg address. In this masterpiece of oratory, Lincoln used only 273 words. Of these words 196 were of one syllable. Surely, the least pretentious communication about the price of pork could not be cast in simpler terms than that.

Some persons, especially young college graduates, feel that, when they are dictating, they must use a certain number of imposing words. A close approximation to the language of speech is better. You have an idea in your mind. If you were telling it across the desk you would use short, direct words. That is the way the intellect naturally works. The intervention of paper does not fundamentally change the situation. Of course, you will wish to omit some expletives and other superfluous verbiage, but you need feel no call to be grand. Some actors have a sense of importance which makes them assume a stage voice. It was so even in Hamlet's day. Refined taste frowns on such affectation.

In conversation some colloquialisms are admissible that are out of place in writing. Any expression closely bordering on slang looks worse in a letter than it sounds when spoken. The dictionary is full of simple as well as of dignified words, hallowed by good usage.

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There is really no need to go outside of these to make yourself understood.

The list of errors common to letter-writing is long. There is only one way to avoid these, and that is by persistent study. A college education by no means guarantees immunity from them. Even if you had the principles of grammar drilled into you years ago, you may now have forgotten to apply them. Breeding and culture, of course, eliminate such obvious horrors as "He ain't," and "I done it," but they give no intuitive mastery of word-technicalities. Books dealing with mistakes that are frequently made may easily be had. No sleight of hand will make you an expert. You must simply study until you are letter-perfect.

Some Misused Words

Familiarity with good books will improve your command of English, just as association with cultivated people will aid your manners and speech. A few words and rules may be cited because they are so frequently misused or violated:

"Party" does not mean "person," but several persons. Do not say: "The *party* came" when you mean, "The *man* came."

"Those kind" is, sad to say, heard over and over again. "This" or "that kind" is correct.

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“Ante” is Latin, and means “before”; “anti” is Greek, and means “against.”

“I shall try *and* come”—you do not really mean that. Your intention is to say, “I shall try *to* come.”

“Avocation” appears used incorrectly in the writings even of educated people who ought to know better. A “vocation” is a “calling,” an “occupation”; an “avocation” is something aside from your calling, hence a “hobby” or a “casual employment.”

“Between you and *I*” offends the cultivated ear. Prepositions, you remember, govern the objective case. Say, “Between you and *me*.”

Distinguish between adjectives and adverbs. *Adjectives* describe things; *adverbs*, as their very name should tell you, modify verbs.

“Did you sleep *good*?” should be, “Did you sleep *well*?”

“She walked across the stage *superb*” and “She walked across the stage *superbly*” may both be correct. In the first version, you mean that she was superb as she walked across the stage; in the other, you call attention to the way in which she walked—her gait.

Ordinarily, it is safer to use “foregoing” rather than “above.” In a short letter the words referred to will actually be above; in a longer communication, they may be lower down on a preceding page.

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The position of a word in a sentence may vitally affect the meaning. Thus, "*Only* she bought a car last week" means that she did but no one else did. "She *only* bought a car last week" means that she merely bought the car last week but did nothing else with it. "She bought *only* a car last week" means that she bought a car last week but nothing else. "She bought a car *only* last week" stresses the date of the purchase. These examples are simple and elemental. When a sentence is long and involved, even writers of good education sometimes make a slip.

Of course, there are border-line cases, and cases in which authorities do not agree. Some criticisms are captious or overdrawn. Thus, one text-book on English composition tells you not to speak of a piano having a "beautiful" tone, because you can not see the tone, and beauty can be perceived by the eye only. The expression a "beautiful tone" is used by educated people, and is specifically sanctioned by the dictionary. But, if you are in doubt, take no risk. Use a form to which no one will take exception. For example, take the so-called *split infinitive*—"to *quickly* act." Some purists regard this with horror and loathing; others defend it. Why not play safe? If you employ the locution—as already noted in Part I—certain people will set you down as deficiently educated. You will escape this imputation by keeping the "to"

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and the verb cheek by jowl. There is nothing to be gained by severing the two.

As to "It is *me*," the case is not so easy. Grammarians tell you that the verb "to be" takes the nominative case after it. Other authorities declare that "It is *me*" is commonly used by well-bred people; furthermore, they say it was brought into the language with the Norman Conquest. The French still say: "C'est moi." This view would denounce "It is *I*" as affected. So, whichever you use, you are wrong or right. "It is *her*" and "It is *him*" certainly grate on the ear. On the whole, your better plan is to be aristocratic and say: "It is *I*."

That a close study of good usage is profitable should be made clear to you. Lapses are sometimes punished far more severely than is deserved. A mistake in grammar will stick out like a sign-board. It may be regarded as typical of the writer's culture when it is merely a slip on the part of a master of the language. A misplacement of tiny machinery may stop a great ship. You will find it advantageous to have high ideals and to adhere to them.

A playful tone is sometimes a help in meeting a difficult situation in letter-writing. It must be used, however, with caution and skill. Efforts to be funny are usually out of place in business correspondence. You never know how some one whom you have never met is

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going to take the joke. He may not see it at all, and then your effort is a flat failure. People like dignity even if they are not especially dignified themselves. In a campaign for Governor of New York, one of the candidates addressed a mass-meeting in the Bowery on a hot August night. He took off his coat just to make the "boys" feel that he was one of them. But, they resented his familiarity. They thought that he was doing something in the Bowery which he would never have dreamed of doing in Fifth Avenue. The name "Shirt Sleeves" stuck to him the rest of the campaign and apparently had an appreciable effect in defeating him.

Vivacity is not out of place in some circumstances, but it should not degenerate into slang. The excuse for slang is that it often conveys an idea more tersely than it could be explained in correct English; but a little searching will commonly bring to you a word that is in good repute, and says just what you want to say. The occasion may arise when there is no substitute for slang. Then it should be quoted to show that it is an undesirable thing which you are gingerly holding between thumb and forefinger. You would far better have a reputation for excessive care in the choice of words than to be classed among the slovenly.

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Some Hints in Conciseness

Dictating is such an easy process to some persons that it tempts one to the use of too many words. You can often discover this when you read over what you have spoken. If you could wield a blue pencil, as does the copy-editor of a newspaper, you could make decided improvements. Unfortunately, you can not send out a letter with many of the words crossed out. If the verbosity is extreme, you would do well to strike out the excess, and to have the letter rewritten. This is the best way to insure conciseness in the future. When you are preparing a form letter or a circular, you should by all means go over it again and again, until it represents your best work. Even then another person, perhaps no more skilled than you, may still find excrescences to lop off.

Manuals devoted to letter-writing present some model compositions which obviously need pruning. Thus one says, "on account of the fact that" when "because" would be better.

Another letter, also given to illustrate excellence, ends as follows:

"Allow us to thank you for this opportunity of serving you, and express the hope that the service of all our products will always come up to your expectations."

Thus, one sentence contains both "serving" and "service." "The service of all" should

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be omitted. Then, too, the word "to" should not be left out before the verb "express." There might be also the further criticism that the word "hope" is unduly humble and timid. Would it not be better to put the case a little more strongly? Thus you might write: "... and to express the confidence that our products will meet your expectations."

Sometimes the superfluous words are merely pointless. At other times they may even be foolish or harmful. Such was the case with a model printed letter used in replying to an inquiry about the standing of a certain firm. The first paragraph reads:

"In compliance with your request of October 8, we are now pleased to inform you of the result of various inquiries instituted in your behalf concerning the company mentioned."

This would not be bad in an ordinary dictated communication. But when it is offered as a standard, it invites criticism. The idea might be better expressed:

"Replying to your inquiry of October 8, the Blank Company—"

The words are fewer, the number being nine instead of twenty-nine. "Various" is superfluous because the body of the letter refers to several informants. "Instituted in your behalf" is quite unnecessary. "Made" would be an improvement upon "institu-

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ted." The facts told were distinctly unfavorable, yet the writer continues:

"Under the circumstances uncovered by our inquiries, we should personally be inclined to proceed with caution in any business transaction which we might enter into with this company."

The intimation is that the inquirer is so dull that even with the damaging data before him, he might go ahead and give a liberal amount of credit. The paragraph should not have been inserted. From the point of view of verbosity, it is likewise defective. The idea might have been condensed from twenty-eight words into ten, as follows: "Therefore, we should advise caution in dealing with this company."

The letter closes with the words: "We sincerely hope that this information may be of assistance to you and your associates."

Let us examine the verbiage first. Why not say: "We hope this information will be helpful?" "May" expresses doubt. None is intended. Why add: "to you and your associates?" The people who sent the inquiry know the answer was meant for their benefit and not for that of some one else. Besides, the sentence, while obviously an effort to be courteous, is really vapid. Of course, the information will be helpful. There can be no question of that. To express the hope that it will be is mere mock humility

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that does not ring true. A proper ending would be:

“We are always glad to be of help in answering such inquiries, for we often have to ask such favors ourselves.”

This critical examination is not intended merely to find fault. Its purpose is to show how easy it is even for experts to make slips. It shows also the need of going carefully over a letter, and of asking yourself: “Do I really want to say that? Is this the best possible way of saying it?”

Collection-Letters

Courtesy does not mean softness. A prize-fighter may shake hands very gracefully with an opponent before a bout, and yet strike hard blows. In collection-letters, for instance, you must be firm and grow firmer with each failure to collect. But it can be done without harshness. Blustering and threatening, especially early in the correspondence, usually prove ineffective. The general idea is that barking dogs do not bite. Sometimes they do, but you do not expect that they will. Often a man who rages is just trying to work himself up to a state of courage. Then, too, such outbursts are usually succeeded by reactions. A man realizes that he has lost control of himself and becomes unduly gentle as a sort of apology. Shrewd men take advantage of

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this trait of human nature. It does not pay to lose your temper even in a righteous cause.

Collection-letters present the difficulty of two opposing interests. You want your money, and you do not want to offend the debtor needlessly. He may have been a desirable customer for years and merely be in temporary trouble. When his balance-sheet shows up better, you may wish to renew relations. Your tone will depend on whether you think he is simply short of cash for the time, or in danger of going under; whether his record with you has been good or indifferent. He can not fairly object to your becoming more severe with each fruitless letter. Persistence is a fine weapon in this kind of warfare, as it is also in many others.

Paragraphing should not be left to the stenographer unless she has been duly trained in it. The effectiveness of a letter is increased by a proper division of its contents. In general, your first paragraph should be brief, perhaps only a line or two. Then each succeeding paragraph should contain a single thought. Too many divisions are preferable to too few. You know how much more readable a newspaper article is if it is broken up into short paragraphs. Long paragraphs usually look solemn and forbidding.

Your final paragraph should commonly be brief. It may occasionally contain a deft selling-argument, particularly when the rest

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of the letter has been about another subject. Presumably you are employed to make money for your firm, and should lose no opportunity to do so. Tact is especially necessary here. A brazen effort is actually harmful.

In general, letters should cover only one subject. If you are writing to a firm on two distinct matters, send two letters. Perhaps the two questions go to different departments for consideration. If both are written on one sheet, awkwardness and delay may result.

Sometimes business and personal elements are mixed. If you are writing to a man whom you have come to know well through correspondence, or have met, there may be occasion to bring in allusions not commercial. It is pleasant to remember that we are all primarily human beings, and not simply cogs in a big piece of business machinery. Sometimes such half-and-half communications are labeled "personal" on the envelop. Then, if the addressee happens to be away through illness or other cause, the question arises, what to do? The envelop bears the name of the sending firm. It may contain matters requiring immediate attention. So the rule that such a letter should be opened by the man who is doing the absentee's work is justified.

This may lead to embarrassment. The contents may be of a strictly personal nature; or they may deal with negotiations which should not be known to the office generally.

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This situation may be met by sending all letters marked "personal," and strictly meant to be so, in plain white envelopes. As the sending firm's name is not displayed, no one has a right to open it but the individual designated. Of course, the writer should be careful to include nothing which should have immediate attention if the addressee happens to be away.

The Trend Toward Economy of Words

Tautology is meaningless repetition. It not only wastes words, but indicates carelessness or betrays ignorance. It arouses unfavorable feelings, and hence lessens the effectiveness of an appeal. In the form of "the month of January," it is found frequently in the best newspapers and magazines. What can January be but a month? "The report for the year 1928" is cumbersome. "For 1928" is quite accurate.

Some newspaper writers display amazing stupidity in constantly referring to "the will of the late Mr. Blank," or to "the funeral of the late Mr. Dash." Obviously, the will of a living man is never admitted to probate. Why explain that the funeral is that of a dead man? If it were the funeral of a live man, the story would deserve a big display on the principle enunciated by Charles A. Dana, the famous editor of the New York

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Sun: "If a dog bites a man, that is not news, but if a man bites a dog, that is news."

"The widow of the late Mr. Smith" is also rasping. She could not be the widow of a living man, could she? "A grass-widow" is a figure of speech, and not a statement of fact.

Stereotyped statements like "Your favor of the 2d inst. received, and contents carefully noted" are out of date. A reference to the date of the letter which you are answering is essential, and should be included in the opening sentence, but it should be incidental. Your main statement should be important. Of course, "contents carefully noted" is superfluous. In the business world, it is assumed that letters will be read with close attention. If you have really given the subject an unusual amount of study, you can say so in a way to show that you really mean what you say.

Economy of words is making headway in correspondence. The old-time "Your humble and obedient servant" is replaced by "Yours very truly." Some firms no longer use the street address in a superscription. This is already on the envelop. The letter having been delivered, it is obvious that the street address is needless.

In interdepartmental memoranda, "Mr. Smith" is enough, without any form of salutation. The signature should be the name

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only without any "Yours very truly." Some corporations extend this principle to other concerns with which they have a great deal of correspondence. For example, a great advertising agency has about 500 accounts; with some of the important clients there may be an exchange of several letters every day. The beginning then is, "The Blank Company, Dear Mr. Dash." Even the "dear" may be omitted, as in interdepartmental correspondence.

Of course, this manner of approach should not be begun without asking the other people what they think of it. Usually, if not invariably, they favor the change. If you have frequent occasion to write to your bank, you might use forms from which the courtesies of salutation and superfluous expressions of amity are omitted. But in ordinary correspondence such a practise would be offensive. In another generation there may be further discarding of meaningless formalities.

Conciseness is to be commended in writing to another business house, but may not be desirable in addressing a farmer. He does not receive much mail. A long letter is sure of receiving a careful reading by him. He is not pressed for time in the evenings. Possibly he is not as quick to grasp ideas as the trained business man. You can, therefore, afford to go into considerable detail, with a certain amount of repetition, if the subject

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warrants it. In writing to inquirers about a correspondence course, it has been found that three, and even four long pages are eagerly read. The young man recipient is ambitious. Education means much to him. Here is some one taking the trouble to write full particulars to him, giving him sympathetic encouragement. Of course, he will absorb every word.

A salesman often has difficulty in reaching the man higher up. Office-boys and secretaries are employed to save their principal's time as much as possible. If the caller is of good appearance and address, he will gain admission the more readily. Similarly, in large corporations, letters are sifted by subordinates. When possible, answers are sent out by them. Only the important letters go to the heads of departments. A well-written letter, based on careful psychological study of the situation, is most likely to reach a high official.

Form-letters, or letters made up of form-paragraphs, can be of great saving in meeting usual situations. They are well worth special thought, because any weakness or ambiguity will affect so many cases.

One great mail-order house has trained a staff of typists to answer letters directly on the typewriter. You can see the economy of this: no dictating, no transcribing. But the subjects covered are, of course, routine. A

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difficult problem must be handled individually and each detail covered.

Some corporations have tried gathering all their stenographers in one office. As each is needed by one official or another, she is summoned. Thus, continuity of employment is secured. It was found that where there was a stenographer for each individual who at times used one, she often had not enough work to keep her busy all the time. This segregation does not prevent a man's having his favorite assistant, altho he may have to wait until she has finished another task. However, in one large corporation in which this plan was tried, it was subsequently abandoned. The decision was that the gain in one direction was more than offset by the loss in another—that when a stenographer serves one man she becomes in effect his private secretary, learns his methods and habits, and can do his work more satisfactorily and more speedily than a chance selection could. If there are intervals when she is not occupied with her speciality, she can use them in other office work. Undoubtedly, the men who dictate prefer to have the continuous services of the same stenographer. They may be delayed and irritated at having to send for some young woman at intervals. Saving the time and temper of a head of a department means more than saving a few dollars on the wages of stenographers.

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The dictionary should always be on hand where letters are written. It should be consulted in every case of doubt, whether as to spelling or meaning. It is really an interesting as well as a valuable book.

“Needless” Letters Often Profitable

A class of letters exists which may be described as those of supererogation. This is an unusual word, but it expresses the meaning better than “superfluous” or “unnecessary.” It is an example of the curious bits of information which you can cull from your dictionary. Even those who have never studied Latin may there learn that *super* means “above,” that *erogare* means to spend, and that “supererogation,” therefore, implies doing more than your strict duty.

Most letters obviously require an answer. Sometimes the need is not clear. Situations arise, without previous correspondence, when you might write a letter and yet could hardly be blamed if you did not. A good rule is the old one in whist: “When in doubt, play trumps.” You will not spend much time or money on a letter, and you may make a good impression. The instance of an applicant for a job, writing after an interview, is a case in point. Sometimes after a long conference with a man, you can think of an excuse for writing a letter to him, supplementing your oral statements. Lawyers, fol-

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lowing this plan, after making an argument before a judge, file a brief with him. The written line of reasoning is probably more coherent than the spoken one. It may recall or emphasize points which would otherwise be forgotten, overlooked, or slighted. Here, of course, tact is essential.

Disraeli labored under severe handicaps as to popularity. Queen Victoria at first disliked him, but later became deeply attached to him. He, in part, won her favor by his practise of writing charming letters to her when he was Prime Minister. He did not confine himself to necessary communications, but wrote whenever he had some gossip or story which he knew would entertain her. His style in this correspondence was always most ingratiating. His great rival, Gladstone, was so solemn and formal, that the Queen never cared for him personally, altho she recognized his honesty and ability. He would never have dreamed of writing letters of supererogation to Her Majesty.

Any one may be suave in asking a favor or in expressing thanks for one, but some of us do not lay ourselves out to be particularly pleasant when conferring one. We think we have done enough when we give the order or send the check. Just here often comes the opportunity to enhance greatly the feeling of good-will. You can pay a neat com-

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pliment to the firm with which you are dealing, express gratification over past transactions, and hope for a continued connection in the future. Thus are you likely to win additional consideration. If you spread a reputation for thoughtfulness and courtesy among those from whom you buy, it will extend to those to whom you wish to sell.

“Well done” messages, praising a subordinate or even a rival for some piece of good work, pay the biggest kinds of dividends on small outlays. Bits of news appearing in the newspapers sometimes give a text for a letter of congratulation. Celebration of an anniversary, admission of a son into partnership, may be cited as examples.

Profitable contacts can sometimes be made by asking a favor. Benjamin Franklin tells of an instance of this. A prominent man in Philadelphia opposed Franklin in some business. The shrewd philosopher later wrote to him a polite note requesting the loan of a valuable and rare book. Not only was the favor granted, but a friendly feeling replaced the old antagonism. Franklin quotes a saying: “He that hath done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged.”

Since all business letters are to some extent sales-letters, the experiment has been tried of engaging a successful salesman and placing

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him in charge of correspondence. This is not likely to work out well. The two fields require men of different types. The salesman must study his customer, and be ready to change his "line of talk" when he senses that he is not making headway. He must think on his feet. The correspondent can give more time and thought to his problems. He can deliberate. The salesman, accustomed to making quick decisions, might continue to make them when there was no need.

Then, too, the man who has been on the road for a long time perhaps rather looks down on the people who merely sit at a desk and dictate letters. Similarly, the infantryman feels superior to the quartermaster's department, altho its work is just as essential as his own. Moreover, a man who has arrived and knows it is not always willing to study diligently the fundamentals of a new craft which he takes up. He thinks his experience in meeting customers is a substitute for painstaking study of details. Training is absolutely necessary to good letter-writing. Some men learn more readily than others; some never learn. But the best of them should study without ceasing, for perfection must always remain just out of reach.

Finally, we should realize that honesty pays in letter-writing as in all other fields of business and life. A clever juggler with

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ideas, paying bland compliments, may get an order which results in disappointment to the buyer. The temporary advantage is more than offset by the subsequent ill-will. A straightforward welding of facts with words is the only principle to follow.

PART III

**INSTRUCTIONS TO
CORRESPONDENCE-CLERKS**

PART III

INSTRUCTIONS TO CORRESPONDENCE-CLERKS

THE printed instructions given to every correspondence-clerk in a certain large publishing house are here reproduced verbatim, except that a fictitious name is substituted for that of the firm. To its letter-writers the firm says at the outset:

The following is intended as a friendly, helpful statement of the principles which should underlie the correspondence of the Excelsior Company. You are the Company to every person to whom you write on behalf of the Excelsior Company. Whatever you write is accepted by our patrons, not as a statement from you personally, but as a reflection of the policy of the Company. Therefore, in order to dispel all doubts, and to do away with possible confusion, it is only right that you should know exactly the attitude of this Company toward its customers.

We publish books and magazines. We publish them, not to please ourselves, but to please the millions of people who are our customers or prospective customers.

Many of the personal ideas and theories of the correspondent must be subordinated to the needs of the person to whom he is writing.

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One of the purposes that this booklet has is to represent our customers to you, to give you a clear understanding of them; why they write to us, and how they expect to be treated.

An enormous sum is expended annually to promote the sale of our books and publications. In our advertising material, we promise a man every reasonable service; every reasonable consideration; every reasonable courtesy. Therefore it falls upon the shoulders of all who correspond with our patrons to sustain the high standards of our advertising.

Every letter that you write has in it possibilities for much good or for much harm. It is both easier and infinitely more profitable to make a friend for the Company than an enemy. A curt sentence, a question unanswered, a blunt, discourteously explained refusal—and dozens, perhaps hundreds, of people are made antagonistic toward the Company.

Try even to stretch a point to give a customer more than he asks for when occasion seems to demand such action, if by so doing we can make a better friend or change a disgruntled customer into a friend or, at least, one who can say nothing but good about us, and you do something worth doing.

Our responsibility to maintain a high standard in our business messages is very great. We publish *The Excelsior Magazine*, a pub-

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lication that from its front cover to its concluding paragraph aims to be a model for the English students in schools throughout the country. As publishers of text-books we are open to criticism on all sides if our letters are not correct in form and substance.

We can easily obtain all the aid that is necessary for the attainment of this high standard. There is no reason for using hackneyed, stilted expressions when we have such a treasury of new and live ways of expressing ourselves as is contained in Fernald's "English Synonyms, Antonyms and Prepositions." The "Desk Standard Dictionary" (Funk & Wagnalls Company), giving the more common meaning of a word first and listing all words in one vocabulary order, has been specially designed for quick and easy consultation.

Our Letters are Our Written Representatives

Because our correspondent lives so far away from our office he writes a letter to us.

Because we are so far away from him we write in return.

In reality, his letter is a personal visit to our office.

Our letters must say the same things that we would like to say personally. They may be called written representatives.

You represent us. You interpret our policies. You adjust our differences; and, above

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all, you build our good-will and have in your keeping our reputation.

Do not haggle over small things.

Do not allow petty differences of opinion to disturb you.

Always keep your temper in check.

Remember

You represent the Excelsior Company. Your letters show our character, our spirit, and our ideals. Our Company depends upon you to maintain its reputation. Treat every letter you receive as you would treat the writer if he were sitting at the other side of your desk. Talk with him. Give him reasonable explanations. Answer his inquiries fully, and above all things, send him away satisfied that he has received a square deal.

First Impressions are Strong

If a correspondent asks a question in his letter or makes a claim, always answer that question or settle that claim in the opening sentence.

That's what the correspondent is interested in. No one is interested in your "desire to call attention to something" or your "beg to inform you."

Your first sentence can give the date of the letter that you are answering, but should also state a fact.

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The Wrong Way to Begin Your Letters

Never begin a letter like this: "Your esteemed favor of the 3rd at hand—as per your request—"

"We beg to submit for your approval—"

"Yours received and in answer to same—"

"We have your letter of recent date and in reply would say—"

"The contents of your letter have been carefully noted and in reply beg to say—"

"We have your letter of June 22 and in reply wish to state—"

Such beginnings will not make a good impression on your reader. They do not create a desire in your reader to finish your letter. If the remainder of your letter is read it will have to overcome the handicap of a poor beginning.

The Right Way to Begin Your Letters

Notice the directness of the following:

"Thank you for your check of \$4.00—"

"Our Spanish-English Dictionary contains —"

"A duplicate shipment of your Bible was forwarded to you to-day—"

"Apparently the check which you sent us has been lost, because the last remittance from you of which we have any record—"

These beginnings tell the reader something he wants to know.

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Do Not Quote from the Letter You are Answering Unless Necessary

In conversation, you would not repeat a question asked; you would answer it at once. Do the same thing in your letters.

To begin the letter with a personal pronoun is the height of vulgarity. The fact should come first.

Dictated: "Your letter of June 18 informs us that you have not received your magazine since May 22, and that before that time it arrived irregularly, sometimes being delivered as late as Tuesday of the following week."

Corrected: "The issues of *The Excelsior Magazine* for May 27, June 7, and June 14 were forwarded to you to-day. We thank you for calling our attention to this delay, as it gives us an opportunity to check up the cause of it with your Postmaster."

The End of the Letter is Important

The last paragraph of your letter should clinch your point.

It should bring the reader of your letter "over to your side."

Don't close your letter with a meaningless phrase.

Every word in your letters should mean the most that a word can mean.

Don't begin your last paragraph with a

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word ending in “—ing.” Sentences starting this way are usually meaningless.

Such words make the close of your letters very awkward and unnatural.

Close your letters naturally, intelligently, and in a friendly spirit.

A Poor Way to Close Your Letters

Can you imagine bringing the personal visit of a customer to a close with such lifeless expressions as the following?

“Regretting our inability, we remain—”

“Hoping that in the future all will be satisfactory—”

“Thanking you in advance, we are—”

A Better Way to Close

The following are examples of how to close your letters:

“We are sorry that this misunderstanding occurred.”

“Thank you for calling this matter to our attention.”

“Your order will be given our prompt attention.”

“If you care to have us look into the matter further, we shall be only too glad to take it up with the Albany Post Office.”

We are Judged by Our Letters

Over seven-eighths of our business is transacted by correspondence.

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That which is written remains a permanent record. We never know at what time it may be referred to, nor into what hands it may fall.

Your letters have the power of making impressions until they are destroyed. Their effect, whether good or bad, may last forever.

To the reader of your letters, you are the Company.

You have it in your power to create good or bad opinions of our Company. Make them good ones.

Five Suggestions for Excelsior Company's Correspondents

1. Answer letters on the day that they are received, if possible.
2. Be brief, but do not sacrifice clearness.
3. Choose the simple words heard in daily conversation.
4. Plan your letters before you begin to dictate them.
5. Be interested in the people to whom you write.

No matter how good a letter-writer you are, you can improve.

Clearness

When men think clearly, and are thoroughly in earnest, they express themselves clearly and with force.

Clearness is the most important thing in a

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letter. Unless your letter be understood it has no value.

Lack of clearness causes misunderstandings, and these are hard to correct.

You really have no right to expect your reader to study your letter to get its meaning.

Facts First

Study the subject about which you intend to write. Be sure you have all the facts clearly in mind.

Try to consider these facts as if you were writing to yourself. Try to feel as the reader will feel. Acquire the "you" attitude.

Fix logically in your mind the thought that you want to express. Then start to dictate your letter.

This method will help you to make your letters clear. Clear letters will save time and money, and will create a friendly feeling toward you and our Company.

Avoid expressions that have more than one meaning.

Short Words are Usually More Forceful Than Long Words

Short, simple words are understood by everybody. They give an impression of sincerity. They save time.

The use of familiar words is necessary to make your meaning clear to the average per-

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son. Simple words are well received even by highly educated persons.

Every one gets a clearer and quicker understanding when short, familiar words are used.

The following examples show that shorter words are easier to understand than longer ones.

abundance	<i>plenty</i>	initial	<i>first</i>
accustomed	<i>usual</i>	inquire	<i>ask</i>
acquire	<i>gain</i>	institute	<i>begin</i>
advantageous	<i>helpful</i>	magnitude	<i>size</i>
alteration	<i>change</i>	majority	<i>most</i>
appropriate	<i>fit</i>	merchandise	<i>goods</i>
approximately	<i>about</i>	narrate	<i>tell</i>
ascertain	<i>find out</i>	necessitate	<i>force</i>
assistance	<i>aid</i>	occasion	<i>cause</i>
commence	<i>begin</i>	operate	<i>work</i>
confidence	<i>trust</i>	participate	<i>share</i>
construct	<i>build</i>	plentiful	<i>ample</i>
contribute	<i>give</i>	possess	<i>have</i>
customary	<i>usual</i>	prescribe	<i>order</i>
demonstrate	<i>show</i>	procure	<i>get</i>
difficult	<i>hard</i>	provided that	<i>if</i>
endeavor	<i>try</i>	purchase	<i>buy</i>
exceedingly	<i>very</i>	redundant	<i>wordy</i>
expedite	<i>hasten</i>	remuneration	<i>pay</i>
expenditure	<i>outlay</i>	render	<i>give</i>
expensive	<i>costly</i>	sufficient	<i>enough</i>
explicit	<i>plain</i>	termination	<i>end</i>
frequently	<i>often</i>	unnecessary	<i>needless</i>
immediately	<i>at once</i>	unsuitable	<i>unfit</i>
imperturbable	<i>calm</i>	preserve	<i>keep</i>

You can tell a big idea in short words.

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A Sentence Does Its Full Duty When It Expresses One Thought

The object of a sentence is to convey one thought to your reader.

You should get your thought to your reader in the easiest and quickest way. You can do this by using short sentences.

The average mind, it is said, can not concentrate on one subject for more than three seconds. "Three-second" sentences will make your letters easy to read and understand.

Long sentences not only lack clearness in most cases, but they are hard to read. Avoid long sentences.

However, do not make sentences so short that they seem curt. There are cases where moderately long sentences are better than short ones.

Make each sentence clear and easy to read.

Correct Paragraphing Makes Better Letters

Paragraphing was invented by a printer who discovered that unbroken masses of typed matter were repellent and tiring to the eye and mind. Indentions and white space make the page attractive and easy to read. They offer resting places.

Short paragraphs make letters easy to read.

Each paragraph should cover just one phase of your subject. It should contain a group of sentences treating one thought

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Such a paragraph gives the reader's mind a chance to absorb your thought before going on to the next phase of your subject.

Paragraphs indicate to your reader the beginning of a new thought.

Every possible effort should be made to have our letters inviting and easy to read. From the many ill-arranged, poorly worded, stereotyped letters that our customers receive, make ours stand out and win their attention.

The unbroken page means a tired eye, and a tired eye means an unresponsive mind.

Try to Make Your Letters Concise

You are more likely to have a prompt and intelligent reply if your own letter has kept close to your subject.

Intelligent conciseness results from an intelligent plan. The ability to put each statement in its right order, to use words and phrases as skilfully as the woodsman uses his keen ax, produces the maximum effect with the minimum of waste and effort. This ability gives evidence of plan.

A letter is concise when everything it says is said in the fewest words.

Completeness is as Important as Brevity

When little words, which you may consider unnecessary, are omitted from a letter, your reader gets an impression of curtness.

He feels that his letter is not considered

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important enough to deserve the extra time required to put in these necessary words.

The wise correspondent never omits conjunctions, prepositions or other necessary words. The omitting of words necessary to conform to grammatical rule is not brevity—it is slovenliness.

Be brief, but not at the expense of business courtesy.

“Correctness and clearness are the first essentials of every business letter.”—*Charles M. Schwab*.

Good-Will

“With malice toward none, with charity for all.”

It is easier to retain than to regain good-will.

Good-will is the kindly feeling that people have toward one another. We want every one to have a feeling of good-will toward this Company. It will make business dealings easier and pleasanter.

Letters that build on good-will are courteous, friendly, sympathetic, tactful, sincere, and show an earnest desire to serve.

Courtesy is the Oil that Lubricates the Business-Machine

Courtesy is just as essential in letters as in face-to-face conversation. There is no other quality in our letters that can do so much

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to build up good-will for the Excelsior Company as courtesy; nothing can tear it down as quickly as discourtesy.

Many seemingly discourteous things must be done by letter. Money must be collected; complaints made; credit refused. These things should always be done in a way that will pave the way for future friendly relations.

The customer's position should always be considered. He should be made to see that we want to be fair.

“A soft answer turneth away wrath.”

A good letter-writer never shows impatience or irritability, but always expresses himself pleasantly and frankly.

If our letters maintain a courteous attitude toward our customers at all times, they will—

Remind rather than instruct,
Avoid anything that sounds like sarcasm,
Avoid that which is worst of all—contempt,
Explain, but never argue.

The Tone of Your Letter

The tone of a business message depends largely on the color of the writer's thoughts. If his thoughts are cheerful and optimistic; if he believes in the natural honesty of those with whom he deals; if he has good-will toward mankind; then, and then only, will his letters have the tone that induces favorable reaction.

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Avoid an antagonistic tone. Such a tone is likely to be produced by the use of such words as unjustifiable, claim, refuse, beg.

Avoid a suspicious tone. "According to your statement," "If, as you say, you never had to complain about this before," "surprized that you report."

Avoid a pompous egotistical, or patronizing tone. Frequent repetition of "we" and "our policy" and general verbosity are likely to suggest this. However, avoid a humble and servile tone. Avoid the frequent use of "beg," "allow us," "may we not," and the like.

Avoid a didactic, preachy tone. The average reader does not enjoy being lectured or dictated to and resents the appearance of an attempt to force his decision. A succession of sentences with "you" as the subject almost inevitably produces this effect.

Avoid a colorless, lifeless or offensive tone. Use of abstract generalities fitted together in a complicated sentence, hackneyed phrases that have lost their meaning—these are some of the things that make a letter flat and unpalatable. A letter should be dignified, interesting, and vigorous.

Tact Smooths Out Business Difficulties

Tact means the ability to get along with others.

Just as long as human beings remain hu-

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man, mistakes will be made now and then. In such cases one who displays tact will avoid "stinging" his correspondent.

To put tact into actual practise is a real problem. There is no thrill or exhilaration when you face the task of telling some one that something has gone wrong. This is where tact comes in with a forward, not a backward, look. No time should be spent lamenting the fact that things have not turned out as expected. Rather, a correspondent should show that he is ready and willing to straighten things out to the satisfaction of all.

Practically every written communication offers a real opportunity for the writer to display some degree of tact. A courteous acknowledgment, a cheerful adjustment, a quickly answered inquiry, all done tactfully, will add to the prestige and good-will of the Excelsior Company.

Whenever a discourteous letter is received, there is a temptation to answer in the same tone. A correspondent who is cool-headed enough to ignore insults to his house or to himself—who can fight down the temptation to "answer back," is an asset to every business organization.

Never write when in the heat of anger. Get absolute control over your emotions before you start to dictate.

If you receive an unjust complaint, or are

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the subject of an unjust accusation, do not answer until you have cooled off. It is bad business to feel that you have sent in reply as hot a message as you received.

Be Sincere

It does not take a customer long to detect a writer who hides behind the mere show of sincerity. Be frank and tell the cause of every delay or mistake.

Sincerity is a state of mind and heart. It can not be assumed. The typewritten words in your letters, under the eye of the reader, are stripped of all affectations. It is useless to attempt to appear sincere when in reality you are not.

The more knowledge and understanding you have of the matter to be written about, the easier it is for you to be sincere. People who do not understand what they are writing about are apt to try to cover up their ignorance. They can not be sincere.

Honesty and truthfulness always gain goodwill and never offend.

Make every letter a good-will letter.

"Never send a wrathful letter—burn 'it, and write another."—*Lincoln*.

"A friendly thought is the purest gift a man can give to man."—*Carlyle*.

"Then give to the world the best you know, and the best will come back to you."—*Longfellow*.

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Claims and Adjustments

The adjustment of a claim may produce more results than a full-page advertisement.

When a complaint comes in, there comes with it a problem that is full of possibilities for good or evil. A situation which requires special consideration must be faced.

To face such a situation requires calmness, investigation, tact, courtesy, and diplomacy—good judgment.

To look upon a letter as a "complaint" is to look upon it aggressively. To make a complaint is to whine. Avoid "complaints" or answers to complaints. From now on there should be only claims and adjustments.

Look at the word "complaint." It has a disagreeable sound. It is a near relative to "knock." "Complaint" should not be used in reference to the message.

The word "complaint" should have no place in the answer. You would not like to be called a "kicker," so don't tell any one that he is a "complainer."

Every claimant thinks that his claim made against us has some justification.

The fault may be ours. It may lie with the Post-Office, the Express Company, or with the claimant himself, but whatever it is we are under moral obligation to give our best answer.

A claim requires an adjustment. A con-

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cession must be made or refused. The big job is to settle the claim satisfactorily and keep the customer.

If a concession is made, it must be done cheerfully, even tho it hurts; and it must be done early in the letter—in the opening paragraph. If there is any attempt to strengthen your case, you can not do it unless your reader is in a favorable state of mind.

Concede willingly, and your case is half won.

Needless to say, expressions that are a confession of hopeless ignorance, as “at a loss,” or “can not understand,” are annoying, for they simply imply that the customer has used language that can not be understood, or that we have no idea of what action to take.

“You state,” “you claim,” imply that we do not believe the writer’s statement, and should not be used.

The phrase “never happen again” sounds exaggerated and can be better expressed by saying, “we have taken care to prevent the repetition of such trouble.”

There may be sweet satisfaction in writing a letter that shows the other fellow “where he gets off,” when answering an unjust claim, but it is not of an enduring kind; and the humiliation that the receiver of such a letter feels may be remembered against the Company for a lifetime.

The provocation may be great to force an

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admission of guilt or an apology. Let the reader of your letter admit or apologize of his own free will, if at all.

The answer to an unjust claim should clear us of blame. A simple recital of the facts will do this. Their source should be specified if any question of their accuracy is likely to be raised.

Driftwood

Stock phrases are the deadeners of letters.

Hackneyed and now almost meaningless phrases, law-borrowed and age-bent expressions, have no place in the correspondence of to-day. They kill both initiative in the writer and action in the reader. Let us discard as far as possible the expressions and phrases that were coined especially for business transactions as far back as the seventeenth century. We would not think of using the office equipment and business methods of but twenty years ago. Why should we continue using century-old stock phrases that are the deadeners of our correspondence?

Advise—Perfectly good English but wrongly used when “tell” or “inform” would be the better word.

And oblige—Too formal and in many letters meaningless.

As per—Stilted. Avoid the use of all foreign words and expressions.

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Assuring you of our prompt attention—The reader expects prompt attention. The expression has become worn and meaningless.

At an early date—Try to be definite.

At all times—"Always" is two words shorter.

At hand—A stiff and ancient way of saying "received."

At the earliest possible moment—In the same class with "At an early date."

Attached find, hereto—Say "attached is" or "accompanying this letter," or "we enclose."

Awaiting your further orders—A very weak way of asking for anything.

Beg—Do not "beg to inform," "beg to advise," or, as far as that goes, do not beg at all.

By return mail—"Immediately" or "at once" is shorter.

Complaint, claim—Harsh, too legal in sound; avoid them. Never refer to a letter as a "complaint."

Contents carefully noted, duly noted—Stilted, unnecessary, and almost meaningless.

Enclosed herewith—If enclosed at all it must be "herewith."

Enclosed please find—See "attached find."

Esteemed favor—Unnatural and often unnecessary.

Even date—Give the date as it should be—
June 28.

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Favor—Avoid using in such expressions as “your kind favor received,” “thanking you for your favor.”

Has come to hand—“Received.” Be as natural as in conversation.

In due course—Try to be more specific.

In reply wish to state—Just go ahead and say it.

Inst., Prox., Ult.—Indicate the month as June, July, August, etc.

Kindly—It is straining courtesy to use this word in such expressions as “May I kindly ask you.”

Please be advised that—Wholly unnecessary to the sense of any letter.

Permit me to say—Pretentious and formal.

Recent date—Worthless and indefinite; be specific.

Same—“Same” is an adjective and is always wrong in expressions “referring to same.” Use the exact word, or “it,” “they,” or “them.”

Thanking you in advance—Not the best thing to say, as it assumes that the other person will, of course, do what you ask.

Thanking you for all your kind favors—An affected way of expressing appreciation.

Trust this will be satisfactory—Very often, when we use this expression to end a letter, we are not sure in our own

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mind that our adjustment of the complaint or claim will be satisfactory.

Under separate cover—It is always better to say in a natural way how anything is being sent—by mail, by parcel-post, by express, etc.

You claim, you say, you state—Do not use these expressions. They imply that we doubt the veracity of the writer.

We see by your letter—Mere wordiness. A sure indication that the dictator is going through limbering-up exercises and is not yet ready to think.

Wish to say, would say that, would ask that, would state—You have the right of way. Say things naturally.

Yours of recent date to hand—You are writing at a twentieth-century desk. Make the reader believe he is doing business with the same kind of firm.

The expressions listed above have become perhaps tried and true members of your vocabulary. These phrases, tho clear in your own mind, may render your meaning hazy and your message ineffective.

Limber up your vocabulary. Learn to use the dictionary intelligently, and your letters, teeming with new life, will have a far better chance of accomplishing their purpose.

PART IV
SPECIMEN BUSINESS LETTERS

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SPECIMEN BUSINESS LETTERS

IT would not be possible in the brief confines of this volume to reproduce business letters in facsimile or to include those covering every phase of business correspondence.

The foregoing chapters lay down in a general way the principles upon which high-class business correspondence should be conducted. Mail-order letters, that is, letters sent to large lists of names with an idea of selling something—usually on deferred payments—are in a class by themselves, and there are no fixed rules that will insure the success of this type of salesmanship.

In the following pages you will find a selection of letters used by well-known business houses for various purposes. The first seven letters are mailed by the Hartmann Trunk Company, Racine, Wisconsin, as a series to collect accounts.

Following them are two letters of the Guaranty Company of New York for solicitation of checking accounts and also to act as executor for estates.

John Russell Cutlery Company, Turners Falls, Massachusetts, have used the two letters, which we include, with excellent results.

The Bell & Howell Company, Chicago, are

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manufacturers of Filmo, an automatic movie camera, which they sell directly to customers. The letters which we print are used in following up inquiries for their product, Filmo, to close sales, and have been successful.

The Hoover Suction Cleaner Company send out two letters through their local agents to sell their machines.

Grateful acknowledgment is here made to all these business organizations for permission to reproduce the letters in question.

Collection Letters

When a customer's bill becomes overdue, the Hartmann Trunk Company gently reminds him of the fact in the following form-letter, the first of a series for possible use in such cases:

Did you receive our statement which included the following item on the first of the month:

.

This merchandise was shipped immediately on receipt of your order. Did it reach you promptly, and was it in first-class shape?

If everything about the transaction was satisfactory, we hope you will send your check on receipt of this letter so that we can properly balance your account.

This letter is followed in two weeks by a second, thus:

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Two weeks ago we wrote to you calling your attention to the following.....invoices which were due for payment.....days ago.

.

As indicated in our first letter, we were glad to be of service to you. We wonder whether you are in need of additional merchandise at this time.

Will you do us a favor? Will you pass the invoice (two invoices) indicated for payment and send us your check so that we can clear your account within the next few days?

Or if the case is a little more urgent, the second letter reads as follows:

I'm sure you don't like to receive reminders about past due items—we don't like to write them, but what can we do?

Two weeks ago we wrote you asking you to tell us when you would be in a position to help us out as far as the following is concerned:

.

You probably have an idea when you will be able to make payment; will it be next week or next month?

Naturally a check for \$.... would be the best answer to this letter. If you don't send it now, won't you indicate below an approximate date?

Ten days later, if no response has been received, this letter is mailed:

Do you know, Mr. that this is the third

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letter we have sent you about the following item which is now days past due?

.

Suppose we had neglected your orders and letters and had waited days before we shipped this merchandise to you. What would you think of us?

You will agree with us, I am sure, that business is a fifty-fifty proposition—prompt shipment deserves prompt payment, doesn't it? A check for \$.... would be greatly appreciated. We certainly expect to receive it before

Or the third letter may read as follows:

On and again on we wrote you in reference to the following item which is now (Six Weeks) past due:

.

When your order for this merchandise came in we gave you prompt service. We made shipment within 24 hours of the time when the order reached us. Don't you think that we are entitled to equally prompt payment of our bills?

This is the third letter which we have written you about this matter. We trust sincerely that you will not oblige us to write again.

If you have not already done so, we confidently expect that you will send us check immediately upon receipt of this letter. We expect to credit your account and clear our ledgers not later than of this month.

One week later the fourth letter goes out:

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This is our fourth request for a settlement of the following item (s):

.

So far you have not answered any of our letters.

If there is some reason for withholding payment, why don't you let us know it? The item is now days overdue; therefore, we expect a check in payment by return mail.

If the account is allowed to run on unpaid for sixty days in spite of the foregoing letters, the attempt to collect it passes out of the correspondence stage with this fifth and final letter:

We wired you this morning as follows:

“HAVE YOU ANSWERED OURS. ACTION NECESSARY IN CASE”

We did this because you have given us no information as to how you are going to handle the following item (s) which is (are) now days overdue.

.

We assure you that we appreciate the business which you have given us, and if you will only give us your cooperation, we want to keep your account on our books. On the other hand, we can not continue to extend credit to you if you (1) fail to meet your bills when they come due, (2) fail to keep your promises to us, (3) continue to defer payment on your present overdue account.

We feel that further correspondence about this matter will be useless. Please send us your check so that

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it reaches us on or before; otherwise, we shall be obliged to ask our collection agency to take up this account.

Form-Letters of a Large Bank

Following is a letter used by the Guaranty Company of New York in soliciting Checking Accounts:

Have you considered the convenience of a checking account with the Guaranty Trust Company in conjunction with your security business at this Office?

Such an account would relieve you of detail when buying or selling securities. You would not, for instance, need to draw checks in payment of bonds or stocks purchased, or deposit personally the proceeds of sales. The Banking Department of the Trust Company would simply charge or credit your account according to instructions, advising you promptly of each transaction.

Thus you would save time and effort.

In addition, such an account would enable you to keep your uninvested funds continually on an earning basis. The Trust Company pays interest at —% on balances of \$1000. or over, according to the activity of the account. At the close of each month a statement of the account is mailed, together with cancelled vouchers.

If you would like to take advantage of such an arrangement and open an account with the Trust Company at this Office, we would be very glad to introduce you to the officer in charge and to help you with the necessary details.

This is a letter sent out by the Guaranty

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Trust Company of New York to solicit business as Executor or Trustee of Estates:

With the turn of the year we would like to suggest to you the advisability of your going over your present will to see whether the provisions that you made when the will was drawn should be changed in any way in view of present circumstances.

Any changes in your situation, such as altered conditions within your family, or substantial changes in your investment or business situation, may make this review advisable at this time.

A full disclosure of the facts to your lawyer and a discussion with him of any new plans that you may have for the disposition of your estate should, of course, precede any alteration in the will, and the revision of the will itself should be entrusted to him.

On the other hand, if there is any information that we can give you with regard to the investment or business problems involved, the practical functions of trusts under your will, or our services as executor or trustee, we should be very glad indeed to give this to you.

We have specially prepared literature discussing this subject which we should be glad to send you upon request.

Letters to Retail Dealers

To sell cutlery to retailers, John Russell Cutlery Company use this letter, signed by the president:

For a small investment of \$86.00 on which you make a profit of \$45.00, you can have a representative line of Russell quick sellers and cash in on our exten-

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sive national advertising, advance notice of which was sent you last month.

What does this mean for you? Three things:

1. A package of our dependable cutlery sent direct to you and billed through your jobber with a quick and dependable profit.
2. An opportunity to tie up with Russell advertising and Russell prestige—to grow with us and be ranked as a Russell quality dealer.
3. A gateway to fair treatment from a thoroughly reliable and progressive house doing business since 1834.

We shall ship you our eighty-six dollar package as soon as we get the order. Send for it now. Let's carry on this cutlery business together—the way in which both of us can build a profitable business.

A second letter from the same company is worded as follows:

Since I wrote to you on February 20, I have made it a personal obligation to call on as many dealers as I could, and discuss their cutlery department with them, earnestly and frankly.

I have discovered a lot. I find that most of the business-building type of dealers view the cutlery situation much the same as I do. They want to handle cutlery that will build good-will. They want a fair profit on every sale. They want a good turnover. In back of all this they want to deal with a company which will give them cooperation and help them sell their merchandise.

These are the very things we have made it part of our policy to do for you. Our national advertising is now being read by nearly five million of the best

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families in the country, including all the worth-while homes in your community.

In order to enable you to start with us now and take advantage of our advertising, we offered you, in our last letter, a special assortment calling for an investment on your part of \$86.00. As a result of my various calls on dealers, I have decided to have our company make it still easier by getting up two Junior Assortments. Assortment "B" will cost you \$28.50, on which you make \$15.10, and Assortment "C" costs \$40.00, on which you make \$21.60.

These assortments consist of quick sellers which are bound to leave your shelves with surprizing rapidity. Write, wire or phone for full details.

Promoting Camera Sales

To sell the Filmo automatic motion-picture camera, this letter is mailed to inquirers:

We are glad to know that you, too, are anxious to learn more about FILMO, the automatic movie camera for personal use. This camera embodies all the essentials of the large professional studio outfit, yet is as portable as its forerunner, the still camera. It is compact and light,—weighs only 4½ pounds.

FILMO accuracy is the achievement of twenty years of specialized experience working toward the development of a movie camera for personal use. It is the product of a company now supplying the major part of the equipment used by the large motion-picture producing companies throughout the world.

FILMO preciseness enables you to record the eventful periods of your life for present and future enjoyment. Imagine being able to recall vividly the activities of

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your earlier days, of your last tour, sporting events, public happenings,—all the adventures of yourself and your dear ones through the fleeting years. Think of the movies you can take of everything you do. You can enjoy these and more pleasures with FILMO. See what the enclosed booklet tells you about it.

FILMO can be supplied to you direct by us, as we have not yet established a dealer in your city.

The difficulty in keeping production ahead of the demand is more apparent daily. You should order right away if you want to be prepared for your new thrill.

This is the second follow-up in the Filmo series:

Since we wrote to you recently you have doubtless had time to review the booklet entitled "Home Movies of the Better Kind," which was mailed with our acknowledgment of your inquiry.

You have learned how easy it is for you to take movies of your own activities—of sporting events, current happenings, memorable outings and the like. Imagine being able, in years to come, to see on the screen in your own home pictures of yourself in your earlier days; being able to watch your children long since grown up, as they were playing; being able to review pictorial records of the eventful periods of your life. No mere hazy recollections of pleasant memories, but clean-cut reviews of the past that you can live over in all days to come.

All of this and more is in store for you when you possess a FILMO Camera and Projector. It is hardly necessary for us to say more about FILMO when you know that it is the product of a company with twenty

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years of experience in the production of the large professional cameras used by studios throughout the world,—experience so successful that Bell & Howell now supply 95% of the world's requirements of this equipment. The results of this experience are outstandingly evident in the FILMO Camera.

FILMO is without a doubt the most efficient and flexible amateur movie camera on the market to-day, barring none.

Your inquiry told us that you were interested in FILMO, and from a review of the literature we sent you, you have doubtless fostered a wish to own one of these cameras.

Every day in the year is a movie day. Each budding season supplies countless opportunities to take movies of many new activities.

Will you let us know to-day what you think about it?

To Sell Suction Cleaners

This letter is mailed by local Hoover Suction-cleaner dealers to selected lists in their localities:

Dear Madam:

This is the time of the year when it takes real battling to keep the health of the family up to par. The long winter indoors, the lack of sunlight, have lowered vitality, made every one easily susceptible to the attack of the first lively germ that comes along.

Have you ever thought what a great additional protection it would be to your family, during this dangerous period of the year, to have a Hoover?

The Hoover not only removes the dirt from your floor coverings, but it removes germs—by the million

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and billion. Its famous cleaning principle, "Positive Agitation," removes more DIRT PER MINUTE than any other cleaner.

It is able to do this because it reaches dirt that other cleaners fail to get—the deep-clinging grit at the base of the rug. In this thorough, all-the-way-through dirt removal, The Hoover sweeps and beats and suction from your rugs the hosts of unseen germs that with less-thorough cleaning remain in the floor covering—a menace to health.

Surely you don't want to take chances on less-protective cleaning when such a simple thing as the purchase of a Hoover places in your hands a powerful safeguard against illness.

Won't you let us bring a Hoover to your home and demonstrate to you how completely The Hoover removes dirt—what thorough cleanliness of rugs and carpets it makes possible? You can buy a Hoover—with "Positive Agitation"—for a price no higher than that of an ordinary VACUUM CLEANER, and you can pay for it in small monthly amounts, paying only \$6.25 down. A telephone call is all that is necessary to arrange a home demonstration.

The second letter in the Hoover Dealer series reads thus:

Dear Madam:

Many women have said to us, "Yes, I want a Hoover. I hope to own one some day. But just now I don't feel like spending the money."

What would you do in such a situation? We made up our minds to make it possible, by a very special short-time offer, for every one of these women to have this wonderful labor-saver.

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Maybe you, too, have felt as they did. Then you will be delighted to hear what we have done.

Or maybe you hadn't even thought about the terms—but have just been putting off owning a Hoover, because you really had no idea how easy it is to purchase it.

Anyhow, you and all our other customers who know the Hoover for what it is—the finest of all electric cleaners—will be very glad that for a limited time you can have a Hoover complete with dusting tools for a

DOWN-PAYMENT OF ONLY \$2.25!

The rest you pay monthly. You can turn in your old cleaner, if you wish, for a liberal allowance on the Hoover. And you can have your choice of two wonderful models, the famous Model 700, which introduced "Positive Agitation" to the cleaning world, and the new popular-priced Model 543, which also embodies "Positive Agitation."

If you haven't seen this amazing cleaning principle—which makes possible the removal of more DIRT PER MINUTE than any other cleaner—you should have a Hoover demonstration in your home immediately, so as not to miss the special terms. The post-card which we enclose will tell us whether to reserve your Hoover or give you a demonstration first. Or you can call us on the phone. But don't miss the opportunity which so many women have been asking for, and which will bring you easier, faster, more thorough cleaning than you have ever before known!



